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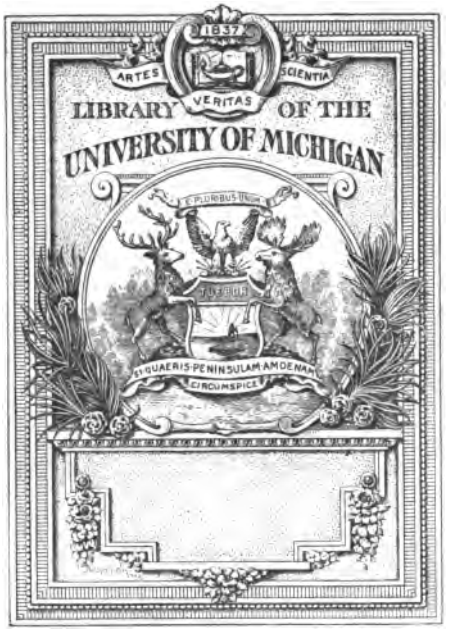
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TRUTHS OR TRUISMS

BY

WILLIAM STEBBING

HON. FELLOW OF WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD

AUTHOR OF

'FIVE CENTURIES OF ENGLISH VERSE'

'SIR WALTER RALEGH: A BIOGRAPHY'

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LAST year I put forth three Essays on themes, though common—perhaps because common—of an interest not exhausted; for, I believe, inexhaustible.

Their reception by thinkers fit, if few, has encouraged me to repeat my experiment on a scale somewhat larger.

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THE DEAD HAND

THE DEAD HAND

'You cannot carry your possessions away with you.'

Can you not? Is not the rule the exact reverse? Or is all the world under a delusion? Observe how every one with goods acts. What are wills for, unless to secure the grasp of the soi-disant dead hand? Is not the chief use of conveyancers to increase the tenacity of the crisp fingers? At the moment when the grip is supposed to relax, it tightens. Almost visibly the dead fondles his wealth in the grave where he knows he has it safe at last.

For a majority of possessors it is the expiring breath alone which appears to awaken the desire to demonstrate ownership to the world. Until then, hosts of the richest have never visibly enjoyed their property, never have manifested a consciousness that it was theirs. The arm waits just long enough for physical animation to have gone out of it to prove its weight. It only ceases to lie heavy that it may strike hard. Very possibly for three-quarters of a century it will not have touched lands and chattels, when suddenly the whole hoard becomes sensible of having passed under control. On the instant the

death-bed becomes a money-heap; and the dead takes corporal seisin.

He who in life seemed to be unaware even of the names of his investments shows his knowledge now by worrying them as a cat worries a mouse. He turns them up and down. He leaves not a fraction to go on fructifying undisturbed. From his retreat, where no appeal can reach him, he adjudges every survivor to be an incapable; sure, if left free to handle, to waste and scatter. He chains wife and children, like galley-slaves on a chain, to Consols and Three per cent. debentures. Henceforth he is audible enough within his household, if never before. Only one kind of liberty he allows its members. It is to choose whether he thought of them as spendthrifts and imbeciles, or credited them with ability to learn the art of living handsomely on a total income averaging half the testator's pocket-money.

How many a tenant of a respectable family monument, where he lies dealing with his cash and freeholds, must laugh and mock, as he listens to his parish pastor in the neighbouring pulpit, explaining how happily impossible it is for the hardest-fisted rich to convey his gold with him to the grave!

NECESSARY NUISANCES

NECESSARY NUISANCES

LIFE without work would have no savour. Man is so made, body and soul, that without work he would be a monstrosity in Creation. His faculties would be worse than superfluities. They would be as liable to become a peril to him as the internal appendage which courts the surgeon's knife. The charter of man's well-being, not his curse, is the decree of Heaven that he shall earn his bread in the sweat of his brow. As work is indispensable, so variety in it is requisite for vigour, beauty, and comfort. All kinds of work are wanted, and none are out of place; none fail to contribute to the efficiency of the universal machinery. It is no contradiction to this series of eternal verities that individuals appear to be a little unlucky in happening to have certain functions allotted to them in their respective circles. To instance a few out of many, there are nightmen, pawnbrokers, Financial Secretaries to the Treasury, detectives and private-inquiry agents, fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law, money-lenders, chuckers-out, excise-officers, school and sanitary inspectors, rate and tax collectors, County Court bailiffs, undertakers, turnkeys, hangmen. I would have added Saturday Reviewers,

had I been writing of thirty or forty years ago, when I was a contributor. Not one of all these classes of officials but fulfils conspicuous duties to the public. Not one is supererogatory. Yet all run a constant risk of being odious, and most of them are.

They believe, I dare say, and generally they are entitled to believe, that they are useful and worthy citizens. Innocence does not shield them from opprobrium. The skilled Egyptians who prepared dead Pharaohs and lesser men for embalmment by disembowelling, had to flee from popular fury at the outrage on the temple of the body. In order to be in a condition to await without dissolution resurrection into renewed life on the banks of the Nile, the corpse had to be cleaned, like a pig's outside a pork-butcher's. Groping in human entrails was the kindliest of ministrations; and it was rewarded by execrations and stones. Sentiment towards a multitude of public charmen and charwomen of modern society reeks with similar ingratitude. On the face of things it is a heinous injustice. Also, the ill-will might be imagined to be very unpleasant to its subjects. It would at any rate go hard with civilization were they collectively to disappear. Everybody has heard how the sailor back from the circumnavigation of the globe, as he recognized on the mudbanks at Thames mouth the remains of pirates rotting in chains, thanked Heaven that he looked once more on Christian soil. Yet the exécuteur des hautes œuvres is regarded by a majority of us with an ignorant shudder! A vast

number of the unversed in political economy look upon the three golden balls as armorial bearings of a harpy. We congratulate a friend on having discovered any pretext, faith in the Plurality Vote, dislike of Tariff Reform, what not, for dropping the post of Downing Street bull terrier! And all the while not one of the abhorred posts, from that of Jack Ketch to the Kennel of the Treasury yard dog lacks candidates.

How account for the ready acceptance of these ungracious functions by an exalted and widespread sense of public obligation? When, at long intervals, the situation of hangman is vacant, a hundred or two of applicants besiege the Home Office. The position of mother-in-law, in favourable circumstances, has been known, I am told, to attract a perfect mob of competitresses. Is it that a hanging, or the equivalent, has to be done; and that, in pure patriotism, every good citizen is emulous for the honour of representing law and justice? Or can there be a loftier motive still? Is a keen perception of duty towards an abominable disagreeableness of itself the attraction? Somebody, it is recognized, must perform it; and does the spirit of Christian self-sacrifice bring forward an army of voluntary martyrs? A glorious, an heroic spectacle, if one only could be sufficiently keen-sighted to discern it! In default I would, if reluctantly, find a solution of the enigma in some extravagance of remuneration for unacceptable labour. But the pay is always strictly moderate. A Secretary to the Treasury receives no more than, and does

treble the work of, a Chancellor of the Duchy, whose business is just to clean up after the rest, or a Lord President of the Council, who has only to sit in his chair, and look pretty. Though Whitaker improvidently omits the salary of the chief executioner, I am tolerably confident it is not even as much. Then again I should grant lightness in the toil to furnish an explanation, were it a fact, as any dustman would assure us it is not for him at all events, or probably for the rest. We are left, therefore, to the hypothesis of Drift; and I suppose, in the absence of aught better, we shall have to put up with that.

It is a general truth, and yet not the whole truth. Men in general, and perhaps Englishmen in particular, are wont to lie where they fall from the nest. The spot may be a nightman's mud-heap, or a bramble-bed about a woolsack. It is not their habit to turn over, and relapse into sleep. They stretch out their arms; and lighting on a tool, whether a shovel or a brief, they set to clearing incumbrances away. Here is the ordinary clue to the extraordinary diversity in the seeming attractiveness of vocations pursued, this or that, just as it chances, by members of a community sharing about an equal liberty of choice. The rule, as in the Church Catechism, is for us to take to the work come to our hands. When it is not preposterously against the grain, we seldom spy around for matter more precisely suited to our gifts. Its requirements must be extremely uncongenial for it to occur to us to

change. Even in the positions usually reckoned among the most obnoxious will be found many good-humoured, easy creatures who somehow have been billeted there, and go on staying. But such cases present no abnormal features. They are simply extreme examples of the prevalent propensity for keeping to the state in which we have been placed. The phenomenon, though by no means uncommon, is a tendency to an actual fondness for qualities in work which disgust most people; a downright spontaneous choice of it on their especial account. Nature takes a pride in experimenting in eccentricities of taste. Some dispositions she so fashions that bloodhoundlike association with crime shall possess an irresistible fascination for their virtuous selves. Mixing rather less heady ingredients in the potion, she will infuse charm into the serving of writs, or the execution of justice upon minor poets. I am willing, and glad, to believe that wading in a sewer may affect some nostrils agreeably.

The hands of a community, in all its grades, take no stain from any work which it and they ought to do. Nevertheless, the circumstances in which it has to be performed are not likely to be all clean. It is a convenient coincidence that individuals in adequate numbers constantly turn up who evince a positive liking for doing work in dirty places. In temper they may not be in the least ill-conditioned. Rats which infest filth are neat animals in their own persons. So, I question not, it may be with administrative

agents, though debarred from being equally nic and high toned with their employer, the public, in carrying out its transactions. A hangman may be the tenderest of husbands and fathers, yet tighten the noose without a catch in his own throat. I should confidently expect a bailiff in possession where the young children were crying with hunger, to give money to buy milk for the babies, yet keep a sharp eye on the furniture meanwhile.

The abundance of the supply of competent servants of the public of the sorts I have indicated, the cheerfulness with which in their representative characters they do work which their hearts would in general ache unbearably to undertake for themselves, are a perpetual and grateful wonder to me. Not a day passes without a pawnbroker and his staff witnessing and booking tragedy on tragedy, not the less convulsing that humble dwellings have been the stage. A collector of taxes or rates must be conscious that his ring at the bell sounds in many ears like the blast of the Last Trump. The detective inhales guilt, and not rarely blood. What a miracle is the humour of undertakers and gravediggers! Think of having been fated to be a warder at Portland, or on Dartmoor, and not minding! When I consider that these are all born children of civilization, it seems to me that they have a cruel parent. I do not know that its crime in having brought them forth to discharge such duties is mitigated by their apparent unconsciousness of having any unkindness to pardon!

HOW TO QUARREL

HOW TO QUARREL

In the first place, don't.

But if you must, so quarrel as not to hurt your own self unnecessarily. For that very personal reason, if not from motives of humanity to your adversary, sting without leaving the sting in; cut with a sharp, not a blunt, knife. As I shall point out later, there are exceptions; but, as a rule, in ordinary life's daily-food sorts of disputes, you have no wish, or intention, to lay the foundation of abiding rancour. We are not given in England to Corsican vendettas. As likely as not, simply the menitripanosomes in your blood were flicking their tails a little more frolicsomely than usually. Consequently, you were in the humour for what I have heard described as 'a good flare-up', on any occasion coming handy. The momentary craving was for blank cartridge firing; and then peace—not of the Tacitean species.

Other people's misdeeds may have been merely incidental. You just were sore from an irritation of your own. The head of your Office, your Leader in Court, or the Judge, a Consulting Physician, a Reviewer—name undivulged but guessed—the cook, your Major, a horse's sprain, had rubbed you the wrong way of the nap; naturally, humanly, you had

to run amok in the open. Then, as it happened, litigious people crossed your path, with arguments on Fiscal Reform, Baptismal Regeneration, a question of golf, the rival merits of Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee. Thereupon, straightway, hammer and tongs! Well and good so far; but what possible ground was there for snatching at a pretext for abusing your mother-in-law to the wife of your bosom—and hers? Any stick does to beat a dog with, and any dog, in general, does to beat. So, malign the Czar of All the Russias, your Parliamentary representative, or The Times edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. They will not mind; or you can bear it if they do. At all events, the foam of your imbecile wrath will not have left stains which refuse to wash out. If you be what I am imagining you, I am sure you have no desire to stab a heart in revenge for a pinprick inflicted you know not how.

Without flattery, I may at any rate take for granted that subsequently you would be sincerely sorry to have hurt yourself. Yet I have known any number of injudicious indulgences in anger, which, in return for an instant of riotous, murderous rapture, have clouded a couple of lives, and perhaps wrecked one of them. Quarrelling, which seeds, or, as is worse, affecting to die at the top, spreads from the roots, even when not fatally ruinous, always has an inconvenient trick of outstaying its welcome. In order to eliminate that troublesome characteristic, a habit has to be formed in advance. An instinct of

repulsion from the use of deadly instruments of offence must be carefully cultivated. At its start a quarrel is intoxicating. A blinding glory invests it. Afterwards the delightfulness of wounding evaporates, after the manner of the after-taste of Jamaica rum, according to Mr. Richard Swiveller. Be careful, therefore, to remove the fangs and poison-bag, before your tongue begins to wag. Banish temptation; if, as I hope, you mean so to disagree as to be able to resume friendship when digestion and common sense have recovered their normal condition.

I have been pitching my little psalm in a high, moral key. In compliment to my audience—to my auditor—I have presumed that quarrelling is no more than an occasional diversion. On more serious varieties I do not pretend to be an authority. From reading and observation, however, I am aware that it may be made a serious vocation. Historical periods, social stages, have existed, at which substantial, cut-and-come-again quarrels filled up large vacuous spaces. The usage, even in those times, would have been intolerably vexatious but for a compensatory, simultaneous power in humanity of pursuing, independently, with different energies, different lines of feeling and thought. Generous aspirations, happy loves, followed their kindly course without disturbance by fancies of fact that the avenger of blood might be skulking behind any bush. Households might kneel in worship before the same altar, and forget for the moment the monuments erected

over slain or broken-hearted kinsfolk in adjacent private Chapels of the Furies. Montagues and Capulets outside Verona might dance with perfect complacency in the same set at the Hunt Ball. An hereditary enmity could even be put to sleep for a whole generation, yet in the next leap up all the livelier for its rest.

The same phenomena, I dare say, may be discovered surviving here and there still. But on the whole, without venturing to dispute on a matter of ancestral taste, I am confident that such occupations for a life are anachronisms in our age. The friction of modern existence, of its pains, work, and pleasures, pushes them into the background, where they fade and die. Only from a very few old-fashioned folks —chiefly ladies—do I hear nowadays the proud declaration, once frequent: 'I am a good hater!' Vindictiveness, under a less compromising name, formerly was almost a profession. It still may number a handful of members. If they like to follow it, let them; provided—for I have advice for them too—they are sure they possess also the old-fashioned art of hindering the fire from spreading promiscuously. Else, after marring other persons' happiness, they are certain to find themselves extinguished as a nuisance.

My concern, however, is principally with the hot-tempered, who really, in other particulars, may not be Bedlamites. My admonitions to them I will sum up in St. Paul's words, which I know very well mean something entirely different though scarcely more important: 'Be angry, and sin not!'

COUNSELS OF PERFECTION

COUNSELS OF PERFECTION

WHAT better!

Everybody ought to apply to himself and others counsels of perfection. How ennobled would human nature be, if all men, in their several classes, and according to their several grades, social, intellectual, even moral, had, each within him, an altar of perfection before which he worshipped, privately, and perhaps publicly too! It would be heavenly to know that from every breast fragrant incense to the True, the Beautiful, the Great, rose up now and again.

An objection will be offered that such an ideal would continually be neglected, and even spurned. To that I attach less importance. The chief hindrance to its observance, to the attempt to institute its cult, I believe to be shame among occasional conformists at the certainty of innumerable lapses. I do not wonder, in view of the habit of Judges and censors of morals in general to be particularly severe on inconsistencies between practice and professions. That is a mischievous trick. The world and humanity suffer by the propensity to regard acceptance of canons of virtue followed by deviations as demonstrative proof of original imposture. As often as not, at all events at the start on a course of lawlessness,

the offenders are shocked at their transgressions. They, morally, beat their breasts, ejaculating, also morally, 'If only!' Let their friends, let society, let even those severest critics, their own relatives, accept their retrospective pledges, and give them a real second, or fiftieth chance. We should cultivate in all men, ourselves included, high ideals. When any desert them, smooth the way for a return —a return home. Treat the aberration, and not the early innocence, as the exception. The wise rule, the worldly as well as heavenly-wise rule for the law-abiding is to help trespassers back into the right path without too many hard words for the act of straying.

It is the true posture of mind for evil-doers also. They should not make too much of their own wanderings, but rather hasten to return within the fold. Encourage them, if they cannot forget, to regard their scamper outside as a fit of somnambulism. As for guides and instructors of all kinds and degrees, I would urge upon them the expediency, no less than the Christianity, of cleaning and mending as speedily as possible the lace ruffles stained and torn in the tipsy vagary. They should not be over-expeditious in laying out for morning wear the sackcloth and ashes. Because a man has played the coward or the fool, it is not to be taken for granted that he will not be a hero and a sage on the next opportunity. At any rate, the persuasion that his neighbours expect the worst of him will throw him

into the arms of the Tempter. My doctrine is not new. It permeates all the Gospels, and several of the Epistles. In a feeble way I have on other occasions ventured myself to argue with non-existent readers that a practical belief by oneself and others in the possibility of building, or rebuilding, man as a moral structure in a series of water-tight compartments lies at the basis of all spiritual reform.

Philanthropists might well despair were they forbidden to hold that man may commence afresh after the bankruptcy, apparently complete and final, of his innocence and self-respect. Excessive stress can too easily be laid on the obligation to redeem the past. In a multitude of cases, perhaps in the vast majority, mistakes, and worse, would, if cumulative, make so intolerable a total that the debtor is likely to think it not worth while to try to liquidate it. He will be disposed to enjoy himself with any scraps of hidden assets. To him, staggering under the burden, discourses on the duty and right to scramble out of the mire on to retrospective peaks of ideal virtue must appear insulting mockery. I know it is a big 'If'; but if he can be authoritatively assured he is entitled to a full discharge, he may venture to enter again for the prizes of good apprentices.

I am aware that evil acts—and thoughts as well—have a disagreeable knack of surviving their immediate personal, penal consequences. It cannot, and, I dare say, ought not to, be helped. At least let not fellow mortals, fellow sinners, uncaught or

unconvicted, aggravate the terrors of doom. They should try to compensate a little their less lucky mates by forgetting, and striving to make forget. It will be a long step forwards in social reform when the winners of the premiums for decorous living convince the failures, and themselves, that the race is ever beginning, and the crown ever attainable. That, I am certain, would do more towards purifying the moral atmosphere, and be much cheaper, than the conversion of every city in the civilized world into an aggregation of the most complete model prisons.

ECCENTRICS

ECCENTRICS

If I had to specify a single conspicuous change which modern English—I might say, European—society has undergone, as compared with that of not much more than a century back, I should choose the disappearance of the Eccentrics. Unless all diaries and collections of correspondence be in a plot to deceive, they abounded in the near past. Every little circle of any social pretensions possessed its eccentric, probably several, as every village had its authorized imbecile. Old Joe Miller cannot have found the least difficulty in picking up examples for his full-dressed and full-flavoured jests. The more fashionable, exclusive the set, the more the oddities, and the more fantastic. A guest might dress like Harlequin, gibber and grimace like Tom of Bedlam, be as offensive as a Clown, as tipsy as Mrs. Cakebread, as gross in language as a Restoration playwright. Mrs. Hannah More would serenely sit-out dinner by his side; Miss Berry would guide his uncertain feet through a minuet. It was 'only Lord This', or 'Sir John That', or, as likely as not, 'H.R.H.'!

What a reform in manners now! What decency in visible morals! What modest symmetry in the white ties, and talk to match! Why, the roistering

buffoons and practical jokers of old could not have breathed the air which is congenial to existing evening dress. I marvel often, after studying memories of Georgian society, at the extraordinary contrast between the ruggednesses it tolerated and the smoothness of our own uneventful social macadam. Our beautiful level is of course not surprising, we being we. The previous acceptance of grotesques, never seen now outside a Christmas pantomime, is the phenomenon. The explanation, I suppose, must be sought in the former isolation and independence of circles. They were few; and even such as there were scarcely touched one another. The higher, which practically monopolized the eccentrics, paid no regard to any censorship but its own. That was extravagantly lenient towards peculiarities which did not infringe its own minute points of honour. The subjection of class to mass opinion which the Revolution began in France, Victorian decorum, curiosity of the democracy about its betters, journalism, and railways have yet more effectually accomplished in our England. Freaks in the best society, whether millionaire misers in rags, like Elwes, or shameless debauchees, like Old Q., could not have stood the virtuous glare of a cheap press.

Opinion in bulk is commonly on the side of propriety and conformity to rule. Disorderliness offends its instincts, and disorderliness in high life even more than in low. It finds no satisfaction in the absurdities which entertained by their variety a narrow

circle living under the constant terror before it of a suicidal ennui. It rejoices that they survive only in the letters and reminiscences of Selwyn, Mrs. Delany, the Miss Berrys, Madame d'Arblay, Creevy, and the like. Readers may feel a passing regret for the dramatic surprises which social outrages created; for their disturbance of social stagnation. Few would, if they could, recall to existence the eccentrics of a century to a century and a half ago, with the circumstances which permitted them to flourish. The law-breakers themselves would neither have the audacity to flaunt their own peculiarities before a scandalized public, nor the philosophy to endure with complacency the effrontery of those of others. The uncouthness, the meanness, the squalor, the riot, the swagger and insolent prodigality, the brawlings, would in these days cause fastidious shyness more disgust than could be made up in entertainment at the picturesqueness of the colouring.

Yes; by common consent the licences to wear motley, and yet remain in the best society, have been cancelled. The sole doubt is what has become of those who in old days would have been invested with the garb. They are not to be discovered in mad-houses. If they have been quietly smothered, they ought to have been at least decently buried; but where are copies kept of the registration of interment? In default of evidence either of their death, their safe custody, alive or dead, or of cure, I am driven to the conclusion that they go

about as free and crazy, internally, as their predecessors who frolicked and anticked hundreds of years ago. At dinner-tables, in the intervals of the courses, I glance down the lines of waxworks feasting in beautiful serenity. As I gaze, I am confounded with admiration of the perfection which the art of enamelling bodily and spiritually has reached since the days of the Regency. But do not doctors say that it is possible to suppress a rash, and breed a fever?

GREAT

GREAT

To me a statesman is Great, whose aspirations happen to run in the same channel with those of his countrymen; whom nature has gifted with eloquence to be their voice; whose conscience is their conscience, and their point of honour his; who has the heart to feel to what extent their will ought to be done, and the courage to admonish them where they should forbear; who is a dictator in an enterprise, and a citizen on its accomplishment; who is Prophet, Priest, Minister, and Servant in one.

A lawyer is Great, who, if an Attorney, reads his client's mind, and the adversary's also; who tries to make peace, but if there be war, and the cause good, fights sturdily, yet always with the sense that he is not paymaster; who loves responsibility, and remembers that every question has two sides; who, walking along miry ways, keeps clean. Who, if Counsel, in chambers sits as a Judge; who has learnt law, and human nature as well; who, in Court, knows his first duty is to represent one side of the judicial mind, or what should be; who can turn juries his way with his little finger and forbears; who at the right time is not ashamed of a burst of rhetoric; who has honey on his tongue,

and a two-edged sword too. Who, if a Judge, knows his duty is to listen to advocates, not to teach them; to tell them where he doubts, and how far they have enlightened him; to refuse to arrive at a conclusion before he has heard both sides; to follow the law, even precedents, though he would like to have it and them amended; to be at once master and adviser of his Bar, and its colleague, friend, and pupil.

The sailor or soldier is Great, who, in learning as a subaltern to obey, has been learning as a chief to command; to whom war is a science, got by induction from circumstances, which, like clouds wandering at will over an April sky, have constantly been changing without warning, and constantly will change, from smiles to frowns, with the sun as it warms, with the winds as they blow; who, in planning a campaign, or a battle, is as imaginative as a poet or an astronomer; who never swerves from his view of the right course in consideration of sentiment at home; who recognizes the prerogative of his masters there to judge the results, whether it be in praise or blame; who, in action, is as unimpassioned as if he were a mathematical lecturer chalking on a blackboard the solution of a problem; who sacrifices thousands of lives as if they were sines and cosines; who mourns over the dead as David lamenting for Jonathan.

A physician or surgeon is Great, who has devoted gladly young manhood, heart, and brain, to the

development of a second-sight in respect of disease: whom study will have trained to trace an attack from its source to its issue in life or death; who is as interested in its progress, in its counter-plots to his, as if he were a chess-champion playing a favourite pupil; who, in his professional pre-eminence, treats a pauper in the grasp of an obscure sickness with as much skill and anxiety as if the hope of a nation rested on a cure; who does not expect to work miracles, but never despairs of witnessing their performance by nature; who continually feels himself on the threshold of a new world.

The merchant is Great, whose ventures seem to competitors to prosper by favour of fortune, until they take the same hazards with opposite results; who accumulates by drops, and pours by floods into splendid enterprises; who has fed and refined dross into a big soul; who is not surprised at his wealth, but that he should be worshipped for it.

The divine is Great, who, at the close of a brilliant University career, has edited for a Leipsic publisher a new text of corrupt Aeschylean fragments, with alternatives and additions, recovered from Herculaneum, corrupter still; who, at thirty, has produced a revision of the Vulgate, acknowledged by a Bavarian Cardinal to have rendered the Vatican revision superfluous; who, at thirty-five, has resigned Fellowship and Tutorship, refused a Regius Professorship, accepted a Mission curacy amid the most squalid alleys of Liverpool, and married the

penniless daughter of a bankrupt merchant prince; from whose obscure pulpit has blazed forth a fire of spiritual oratory, making of the Church of St. Silas a Protestant Mecca; on whom offers of Westminster Canonries, Deaneries, Bishoprics, have rained from successive Premiers; who tranquilly, with his wife's eager approval, has declined them all; than whom, and his wife—lovers both—never could there have been two happier beings; who, at fifty-five, has put off a body worn out with toil, bearing with him all the fire of soul; whose hymns, never claimed, are sung by all denominations of Christians throughout the Anglo-Saxon world; whose half-finished Eirenicon, discovered by his executors, laid aside at the back of his desk, and printed by them, roused a war throughout Christendom, which rages yet.

Take a poet who utters melodies he finds flowing, after long ripening in brain, from his pen; who is a voice for hearts which are dumb, not deaf; sings as the bird sings, because he must. He is Great, for the intellect which is great, for the heart which is greater, for great ideas, and diction to clothe them; for the gift of seeing beauty in all things, and reflecting it in charm; for thinking the thoughts, thrilling with the emotions, speaking the language, of his own age, which will be the conceptions, feelings, fancies, words, and music still of the future.

Thus, I have imaged to myself Greatness—not necessarily Goodness—though the two sometimes

have joined hands. Is there any resemblance between my phantasms and those whom the world has acclaimed as Great?

Popular phraseology has so christened a few; and history has indulgently acquiesced. At the moment I can recall but eight such; Alexander, of Macedon, Constantine, of Rome, Gregory the First, Charles, of the Franks, Alfred, of the West Saxons, Peter the First, of Russia, Frederick the Second, of Prussia, and Napoleon, of France. If I add a couple similarly dignified by insensate flattery, Pompey and Louis Quatorze, I shall scarcely deteriorate the moral complexion of the poverty-stricken total. For very shame let me dilute the coarse clay, relieved by the presence of the Pope and our native hero alone, through the introduction of several admitted to have the higher characteristics, though without the conventional name. I do not suppose that any would deny the suffix of Great, on the score of great enterprises, to the names of Moses, David, Confucius, Pericles, Epaminondas, Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Belisarius, Mahomet, Hildebrand, Luther, Cromwell, Bacon, Galileo, Milton, Newton, Voltaire, Wesley, Howard, Washington, the younger Pitt, Goethe.

A strange medley! If we took the men to pieces, in one here and there we might come upon a shining virtue, in another on a galaxy. Oftener we should discover pettinesses, pitiful infirmities, dishonouring vices. The surprise would be that the admitted

defects did not cancel the Greatness; that beauties of personal character, if they illuminate, would not have made it; that an Aristides stands outside the line, and a Themistocles, it may be, within. The second William Pitt missed, I think, being a Great statesman on account of personal failings. Almost on the strength of them history has enrolled him among Great Men. Great men are the creation, the manufacture, of popular, of national, of the world's acclamations. For their selection analysis of character, processes of mental and moral vivisection, are not of primary necessity. The decision depends in the first place upon the work done, and the verdict of a people upon the conclusiveness of the results, sometimes even upon their relation to its pride and vanity.

A State, an Age, the World, has a want, of which itself may be unconscious. An individual, or a conjuncture of circumstances impersonated in one, arises to satisfy it. The human instrument of the boon is proclaimed 'the Great'. Try those to whom the title has been commonly awarded by that test; try by it my longer list; and in general the names, I believe, will pass the ordeal. Or put it in another way; associate an epoch, an era, with a particular man; and he is hailed as 'Great'. He may be a selfish genius, or a self-sacrificing patriot, a Caesar, or a Washington; a brutal Czar Peter, or a poet-king, like David; a Gregory the First, or a Gregory the Seventh; a worldly cynic, like

Voltaire, or pure thought, like Newton. At all events, whether with a guardian Angel by his side, or possessed in his ordinary self by seven Devils, he willhave carried his particular world a stage onwards; and that world cannot sever the ideas of him and it. Popular sentiment, when it is told that Greatness is inseparable from Goodness, applauds. The next moment it is heard singing paeans to a Frederick or a Napoleon.

The course of events is not fastidious in its choice of instruments, so that they have an instinct of the task with which they are charged, and resoluteness to accomplish it fully. Its Great Men, paraded together, compose a ragged regiment. The only sign of grace apparent in them is that they would never have invited one another's company. The only points of resemblance among them are tenacity of purpose and strength of will. On proof of their absence a hasty investiture is cancelled, as of Pompeius Magnus, infirm of purpose, in favour of resolved Julius. Revolutions, whether in mind or matter, in the realm of politics or of spirit, are not made with rose-water. Old sovereignties have to be uprooted that new may be planted in their place. Athens and Sparta, under an Alcibiades, or even an Agesilaus, would never have overthrown tottering Persia. The autocracy of half barbarous Macedon, with the Homeric ambition of an Alexander, was needed to decide the fall. Christian thought would never have recovered its freedom, and in its emanci-

pation purged the Vatican itself of its elegant, loose Paganism, had Church reform depended upon the personal sanctity of a high-bred scholar like Pole, and the witty sarcasms of an Erasmus against boorish friars. Nothing lighter than the bludgeon of a Luther could have crushed the 'Blatant Beast'.

The Great man, a Moses, a David, a Hildebrand, a Luther, arises when he is wanted. His successes are signal, yet not more remarkable than his rebuffs; for he never despairs! The sole exception which I can call to mind to prove my rule, that the final test of Greatness is magnanimous endurance of adversity, is the demeanour of the latest on the list, and in some ways the chief. Yet how blot that name out of the roll!

FREEDOM

FREEDOM

Most of us suppose we know the meaning of freedom; we should be puzzled to define it. We may say we are free when nobody has the right by whatever name or title, to decide, and can decide, for us how we shall or shall not act, speak, or think; when circumstances and laws have no such right and power to decide. A primary difficulty is that actual human life never attains to that degree of independence; that man always is a creature of laws and circumstances. Were he suddenly to find himself absolutely free, he would be incapable of action or thought. Freedom wholly unrestricted is inconceivable. No existing condition of it is wide enough for our description, which does not pretend to be a definition. No characters in history have been free to that extent; not a Greek tyrant, who had to buy and flatter his mercenaries; a Roman Emperor; a Russian Czar. Was Alexander Selkirk in his desert island? All are and have been governed by circumstances, by educated instincts, by laws of some kind, by social usages among others, in which they exist. Theologians, with an audacity nearing blasphemy, have been known to argue that even God is not superior to His own laws, which only shows

how incomprehensible is Omnipotence! Man, at all events, when living among men, is not above law. Any freedom he enjoys, far from being nullified by the constraint of law, is possible only because it is compatible with obedience to law. Let one endeavour to prove that the actual limitations are mere accidents, and he finds himself landed in a paradox.

So little of a positive quality is in freedom that its nature cannot be explained unless by negations. A citizen is to be regarded as free when other citizens may not use their freedom to interfere beyond reasonable limits with his. The community as a whole, however autocratic, is bound to be equally self-denying in the exercise of its freedom of rule. That is, it may not impose curtailments of personal freedom which are not necessary for the purpose of enabling its members in general to exercise their freedom both severally and in the mass. Under a Constitution like the British, not merely are the rules, customary and statutory, which pare down individual liberty supposed to represent this intention, and to have been established for the purpose by general agreement; but their maintenance undoubtedly depends upon continuous national acquiescence in the same view. The British Legislature, as representing the national will for the time being, accordingly cannot bind even itself not to change enactments affecting individual liberty.

No more conclusive proof could be adduced of the difficulty in explaining the meaning of freedom than

the behaviour of this institution of ours. The branch which is understood, in the last resort, to be paramount, by its origin and its nature, is the guardian both of general and of personal liberty. There is no reason for questioning its most sincere persuasion that it desires to be a faithful and a jealous custodian. Yet we all of us know that, throughout each session, Parliament in our own days is diligently engaged in lopping and pollarding liberty. In the name of liberty it interferes between master and servant in a hundred different ways. It forbids a landlord to build a cottage as he prefers. It coerces parents in the management of their offspring. It charges itself with school children's diet and eyesight. It locks up, or lets flow, the water in the village pump, and the sewage in the village drain. Each special intervention may justify itself. At the same time each is an inroad upon individual freedom. If Sir Robert Walpole could revisit his old haunts at Westminster, he would regretfully contrast legislative licence now with the popular sentiment which howled down the Excise Bill.

Our Anglo-Saxon selves here glory in their profound affection for freedom, and in insisting strenuously upon its enjoyment. Across the Ocean or Oceans our sons, brothers, cousins, are cast in the same mould. To judge by the practice of the race everywhere, a general idea of the privilege is that the community as a whole is a trustee of it for the individual members. Even itself does not claim

directly to govern. It is satisfied with setting up and pulling down Governments, which represent the majority in it. Practically the sole active right reserved to individuals is liberty to grumble all through at its divers representatives, and periodically to shrive and shift them.

When a Special Correspondent from Mars communicates with his Editor on the thing called freedom in the British Isles and offshoots, I should not be surprised if the gist of his report were, that it is a piece of property principally valued for the purpose of giving away, or perhaps putting out on loans perpetually renewable. He would not be far wrong; neither perhaps are the several owners in their custom of abnegation. Positive freedom, with an obligation to exercise it habitually, would be an intolerable burden. It would be like having to begin a new life on each new day. Think of going nightly to bed with the consciousness of so restless a dawn awaiting us! A man may suppose that at least in soul he is free. Dig down there—and what a spectacle of tyranny and slavery! Nothing in creation could bear, or has to bear, a load of continual independence. A tiger in an Indian jungle, a condor on the Andes, a naked Papuan warrior, is hide-bound by circumstances and instincts. It is all very well for us to picture Freedom, and in particular our own insular variety, as sitting in inviolate security on her heights, whither, from the valleys below, ascend, to be sovereignly regulated and composed, the roar of

Parliamentary debate and the wranglings of county, borough, and parish councils. The truer metaphor would be of a cartload of family plate chronically lodged for safety at the family bank. I only hope we should find it easy of extraction thence did some serious aggression by a majority upon liberty of judgement in matters of opinion require a minority to reclaim its property.

DOING WITHOUT

DOING WITHOUT

A GOOD motto with a view to self-training, but less useful socially. In my experience, for getting on with one's company it is more advantageous to multiply wants than to stint them. A judicious taste for the best vintages, high-priced cigars, expensive mounts and shooting, fashionable clothes, rare books, or at all events first editions in costly bindings, brings respect, and invitations to houses where such luxuries are to be found. A combination of a notorious preference for the choicest, with good-humoured, if somewhat contemptuous, readiness to rough it on the indifferent, though the second not an essential faculty, is so much into the bargain. Rather paradoxically, episodes of low living often are endured more cheerfully by men of Epicurean habits than by a class a degree or two lower. But intervals of Spartan simplicity do not become the rule unless through hard necessity. A more complex regimen is resumed as speedily as possible, and the wanderer is gladly welcomed back where he can enjoy it.

Not that a discriminating appetite for pleasure is enough for permanent prosperity. Workhouses, the Bankruptcy and Criminal Courts prove its insuffi-

ciency. Certain discomforts attend pressure for admittance to family purses by genealogical bad sixpences. As an accompaniment of qualities directly making for success, on the other hand, it is always an ornament, and frequently a lever. The truth, I presume, is that commonly the state signifies a spirit of fellowship with brother workers, those we use, who have to use us. It is become a truism of combative strategy and tactics that the offensive will beat the defensive. A determination to enjoy much and the best means a mood of offence, not defence, in militant social life. Pray let it be understood that it is against the grain when I argue that a man will promote his social importance by giving all the trouble he can. Personally I have neither the courage nor, perhaps, the inclination to play the part which that implies. But I am on the philosophy of life. So far as concerns the great art of getting on I am obliged to conclude that Doing Without is not the best policy.

To outsiders often, sometimes to those within the circle in which the man of whims lords it, the source of the power is a perplexing question. Reasoning backwards, and starting with the necessary assumption that there is something in him to concentrate a modicum of attention, I am no longer surprised at the increase of attentiveness in proportion to the multiplication of demands for it. The assumption, which is not a large one, is easily satisfied, and justifies itself. Natural affection is a common founda-

tion. You will scarcely find a circle without a fond slave of an invalid mother's needs and caprices, at times a father's, at times a brother's. There are bachelors and spinsters ready to aver that this, which is a not unusual phenomenon among or between blood relations, is the universal rule in matrimony. Beyond the family, wherever human beings are thrown together, one will constantly be observed exacting a disproportionate amount of care and thought for all sorts of trivialities which have no real concern with the original claim to consideration. Ministers of religion, lecturers, poets, novelists, and playwrights, statesmen and demagogues, are worshipped the more for their social vagaries and petty tyrannies. Masters and mistresses have theirs besides what they pay for, and are requited above their due with more faithful service. The same feature marks ordinary friendships. Occasional rebellions there will be, as of 'Mrs. Morley' against 'Mrs. Freeman'. A close friendship requires, as in that historical instance, an outrageous degree of selfishness to burst the bond. When once the fellowship has been contracted, every year's endurance of the yoke of a tenacious, unconscious egotism means an investment of capital patience which the victim is increasingly loath to write off as a bad debt.

Such endurance, I believe, represents the common experience in the relations between an egotist of parts and his fellows. In a pair of associates, only

one egotism, I need scarcely say, can be afforded. On the immediate social results to the owner of the quality I have already stated my opinion. He will be remarked for his fancies; and, if there be real value behind, consideration for that is secured. Great qualities will be magnified; pettinesses will delight as drolleries. How far indulgence in the propensity to have many wants, and to expect service, affects, on the other hand, the moral character is too large a theme for the present obiter dicta. All of us know the universal opinion to be that the inclination cannot be too severely snubbed; and, I dare say, the censors are right. Obviously it must tell ill on the nature of any human creature to be allowed to suppose it lawful, even Providential, that his or her fancies shall have continual preference over another's. Only, when, as not rarely, I have happened to come across beings of the kind, I have never found them sufficiently sensible of their own defect to be willing to try to correct it, or their critics courageous enough to set about the task themselves.

I am afraid I am already liable to the censure Macaulay passes on the comic dramatists of the latter half of the seventeenth century, who thought they redeemed the licence of their scenes by a closing declaration of the ultimate triumph of virtue. My assurance of the wrong which indulgence in selfish and troublesome caprices does to the moral character will hardly be held to balance my

testimony to the social advantages of the misbehaviour. Probably I am exposing myself to further condemnation in qualifying, as I must, my sincere admiration of the sacrifice of all the individualism of life by some to the unregarding, self-regarding individualism of others. I have referred already to the unsparing devotion of children, wives, and sisters. It is a beautiful spectacle, and not without gain in its way to the heroines, or, it may be, heroes. Human nature is not complete without a career. Old age and sickness are blessed thus to self-sacrificing young lives. Occasionally even they are less to be pitied in their anxieties than when they are set free. I have known a wife or sister to die from sheer lack of reason for living, on the snapping of the tie she cherished. Yet, while I recognize such possibility of reward, and the loveliness always of the devotion, sometimes I have been disposed to be unfeignedly indignant with those who have been rendering it. A life is a life; and its owner has no right to carry self-sacrifice to a degree which leaves the residue of days an empty shell, a gasless cinder.

It is, however, I am aware, of as little use to warn the givers of their hearts' bloom of this truth, as to undertake the task of converting a hardened egotist. The only chance is to preach to thoughtless but innocent recipients of the devotion. Their bounden duty, disease- and year-worn though they be, is to insist that a tributary life shall not be used up to a point which will exhaust its capacity

for independent existence. It is hateful to strangers to see, and should be more hateful still for an object of the sacrifice to imagine, semi-animated driftwood cast up without a future on a foreign shore from a ship which has disappeared below the far horizon.

CLERICAL ERRORS

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BENJAMIN FRANKLIN enjoyed a successful, a triumphant career; and he fully recognized the fact. He has expressed in writing his ample satisfaction at his recollection of it, with a reservation. He would have liked to be allowed to exercise for a moment his old province of a Printer's Reader, and delete a few errors of the press. Even his complacency was occasionally ruffled by the intrusion into his memory of some untoward little incident. He might have given way to an undue throb of indignation, lost his temper, and ceased to be a philosopher. It is not certain that, keen as he was to detect foibles in others, he did not feel some after-sense of burlesque in the resumption, to attest at Versailles Great Britain's acknowledgement of American Independence, of the faded coat which had witnessed in Downing Street Mr. Attorney Wedderburn's insolence to the Colonial Agent. He may even have blushed for some temporary emotion of sensual passion. He may have recollected a neglected opportunity for rubbing-in a vitriolic sarcasm as he closed a controversy.

All of us, except the many perfect friends, and especially relatives, that have fallen to everybody's

lot, are conscious of a similar craving. We are liable to be annoyed by what Franklin called 'printer's', though some will prefer the term 'clerical', errors in our past. The apparition will present itself of the now dead school-mate, out-at-elbows, red-nosed, whose memory we did not jog, when, fortunately having forgotten us, he swayed by us and our Pall Mall acquaintance. We are haunted by a rough rejoinder to father or mother. We would rather not have had the last word in that bandying of acid repartees with the rival critic who died next day. We are infested with a swarm of needless bygone bickerings, in which we were so manifestly victors, and would prefer not to have been. A dozen, half a dozen, slight corrections would be an immense addition to our comfort; and nobody could be the worse; perhaps, everybody would be much the better.

So it seems; and as if it were the plainest, the commonest common sense. Yet I doubt if Franklin, its most eminent type and embodiment, were right in his regret and wish. I do not believe that a free hand here and there about life's proofs would yield to any one, would have yielded to 'Poor Richard' himself, clean pages in the completed volume. In the first place the number of indispensable emendations would be found to multiply extraordinarily. Those which fret or divert our fancy are samples only. Erase them, and scores more would clamour for like treatment. I have known sheets cor-

rected in their first state by an author to be returned later by the printer black with fresh corrections of unobserved and glaring blunders. It would be the same with clerical errors in conduct. Every mistake which pushes itself into a front row in the conscience does duty for a troop behind.

Nor, in the second place, are they all by any means trivialities. They are not necessarily the unlucky gaucheries which shame without scarring. They are not merely missed opportunities, as of a parting dole to the ill-favoured crossing-sweeper, who, one hears on returning after a long vacation, has drowned himself in the Canal to be rid of the boredom of chronic semi-starvation. They are not transient losses of manners or temper. In a host of bygone reminiscences, which rise up to torment us, there is too often a sense that they are no mere accidents. Much too usually they are but blossoms on rude, rank stems of weakness, cowardice, greediness, vanity, selfishness, murderous rancour. Blot out, wash, hide away, if you can; a malarious, rotten growth shows beneath. The healing course may be to let the cancerous germ thrust itself into the light and sight. Suffered to parade its ugliness, it may worry till the saving knife cannot be withheld. The sole chance is amputation of diseased limb and poisonous contagion together.

Had the officious maid of the High Priest wrung betimes for her wounded fellow servant's supper that

early crowing cock's neck, Peter would have been spared the horror of abjuring his Master. He would have been saved the bitter anguish of his repentance also. What a very poor Prince of the Apostles should we then have had!

COURTESY

COURTESY

Courtesy is a beautiful and rare quality. It must never be confounded with politeness; not that we ought to undervalue polished manners. They are a product of Civilization, and among its best. Even in civilized ages they are general only, not universal. A circle is scarcely to be found anywhere in which cross-grained beings do not flout their neighbours. But, however many, these are exceptions, not the rule. They are endured, and sometimes encouraged as a variety and diversion. Civilization attaches real importance to the removal of pebbles from the roads it travels. Without any extraordinary attention to elevation of the spirit, it is determined that at least outward behaviour, where visible, shall be well rolled and smoothed. Persons in society are trained to give way from a sense of mutual convenience. They expect to find others giving way in turn to them, and commonly they are not disappointed. Unfortunately, evenness of the surface, however dexterously it has been levelled, and the dissembling of natural crabbedness, have little or no affinity to the inner graces of the habit, or temper, of which I understand courtesy to be the flower and fruit.

It is so amiable a creature that I should like the virtues to be able to rank it among them. With half a dozen it runs indeed on lines so closely parallel as to be hardly distinguishable. Yet it remains always distinct. Look for it on the virtuous side, and how constantly it is absent! Some of us may have had the fortune to be acquainted with men or women almost ultra-virtuous. Also, we have had, in some of the same cases, the distress—if with a comic touch in it—to note an utter incapability of courtesy. They have, as it were, gone out of their way to discover opportunities for putting a foot—a clod-hopping foot—into friendly talk. It has been as if they intended to annoy. When a wince, affecting a laugh, from the victim, or the confusion of the rest of the hearers, has suggested a blunder, the perpetrator will have plunged inextricably deeper. He will ask a husband after a wife who has just run off with a lover. He will ostentatiously stifle conversation about the stage, for the sake of a guest whose play has been damned. He will express his regret to a plain spinster that few young men now have the good sense to mistrust good looks. Kindness the most indisputable is itself no safeguard. I am familiar with affectionate blunderers whom it is a horror to meet, unless one have a very tough hide, or enjoy a sprinkling of vitriol upon others in the company.

Courtesy is a thing by itself. No satisfactory definition of it has ever been made; and only as in

action can I describe it. There it never is out of place; and it is never officious, never superfluous. It can administer rebuffs without bruising. It claims no deference; it does not reject it, when required by the relation of the giver, and by the occasion. On the same conditions it renders it. Accepted or offered, the homage has the charm of spontaneity. So instinctively is the measure proportioned that what else might have offended becomes with it beautifully natural. It unites veneration of elderly womanhood for the age it has, with courtship of the bloom it had. It teaches a youth to argue against his seniors with so graceful a fire that, instead of resenting the tone of equality, they delight in the flattery of a forgetfulness of their years. It shines in all assemblages, and into all hearts. Any one, Prince or Peasant, may have the gift. Everybody, Prince or Peasant, having, must manifest it, for it cannot be hid. Nowhere are we insensible to its presence. How sweet breathes the air! How the gracious spirit generates its like! How, before it, every one has the feeling of being higher, better, kindlier!

And not merely is it indefinable, but nobody can tell its origin. It is no necessary product of gentle breeding and education. That imitation of it we all know, and how it may constrain, and freeze. It is not the result of a conjunction of moral and intellectual completeness; or we should seek for it in Oxford and Cambridge Common-rooms, or on the

Judicial Bench. Sympathy is at its beck and call, without being it. On the contrary, there does not exist a quality with more fatal a genius than certain forms of sympathy for the racking of nerves. Intrinsic goodness of heart is its superior without in the least supplying its place. Virtue, as I have shown, is far from assuring its practice. As much, I am afraid, must be said concerning itself with regard to virtue; for I cannot deny that paragons of it have wrecked homes, sacrificed their country to personal ambition, and squandered, almost stolen, their children's inheritance. But I am certain, nevertheless, that for the growth of true courtesy, compatible as are moral blemishes with it, an original atmosphere of pure and virtuous tendencies is essential; that it is an effluence thence. When, as sometimes, it and moral excellence even partially join, the combination is wellnigh irresistible.

SELF-DECEPTION

SELF-DECEPTION

It would be a great mistake to suppose that all lying to oneself is self-deception. Self-deceiving, to be entitled to the name, must have a sort of honesty in it. Not too much; for then it probably would imply, or be near akin to, insanity, or brainless jesting; but a something. Of true self-deception there are two main kinds, the moral and the intellectual. I do not know which is the more common. Though certainly it takes more out of one to pretend to be moral than to pretend to be intellectual, the finished self-deceiver in respect of morals is not at all a rarity. Everybody will have come across some specimen. He, as I will say, though more usually it is 'she', is frankly confident of his own goodness. He is charitable, generous, forgiving, and just to a fault. Into the bargain he is morally, if not physically, courageous. When he punishes, it is for the sake of the offender, not from resentment. If he is angry, it is at the iniquity, or the clumsiness, of others. The propensity of awkwardness or malignity for crossing his path is marvellous. For the most part he happens to be religious also, and to have hit the golden mean of theological infallibility. Doubts of the correctness

of his own orthodoxy he has none. He only wishes he could be as assured of that of his neighbours. To bystanders, especially to relatives and dependants, it is embarrassing when two such infallibilities meet in the same family.

A less perfected example of the same type is the self-deceiver who is sufficiently clear-sighted to be aware that he has defects, but cherishes a fixed belief that they are strict confidences between himself and Heaven. Heaven, by the way, he, confidentially to himself, thinks cannot help being flattered by the trust. It is, though partial, real self-deception, like the other's, so far as it goes. With entire sincerity its victim or practitioner is indignant when he is not taken at his own valuation. Therein is the self-deception. He is as righteously wrathful at the hint of a flaw as the wife in the old story, when her husband sought to console her in her loud confessions of heinous sinfulness: 'Well, well, my dear, you may have your little faults, but—' 'And, pray, Mr. B., what may those little faults be?' Any number of us are liable to this apparent inconsistency. We are properly sensible of our own shortcomings; we cannot understand that our neighbours are equally discerning of others, a slight limp or squint, detracting to critical eyes from angelic grace. Allusions to them are set down to envy; and very often with entire justice. All the same, a subject of such malevolence, when he finds himself somehow seated on an unintended stool of repentance

will often betray, by his cleverness in choosing the soft places, that he is as much at home on it as on his own fireside chair.

Self-deception is at least as rampant in the domain of intellect as of morals. There are interesting varieties. Thus a writer of renown solidly built up of achievements in one department of letters, will imagine he can transfer his powers at will to another. An accomplished historian will proclaim himself a poet. Most comedians are sorry for the public that they never are cast for high tragedy. A popular novelist will take to history and biography. I am personally acquainted with a journalist who fancies he was made for a story-teller, though the public knows better. Still, here there has been only a misapplication of a talent. But there seldom is any such mincing of matters—I mean within the breast—when the question is of the total mass of brain-power, absolute or relative. No ordinary measure can be applied to intellectual overweening. A friend need not fear the reproach of adulation for regretting that a minor poet had been anticipated by FitzGerald in inspiring 'Omar Khayyam'. He will not overstep the mark in comparing a twentieth-century feuilletonist with Elia. Not that in these cases too, as in those of moral self-deception, a distinction may not be traced between audacious arrogance only a little below the surface, and a self-mistrust deeper down. A multitude of authors and thinkers imagine they believe that, if intrinsic merit could be weighed,

theirs against that of some contemporary celebrity, theirs would not kick the beam. Not all in fancy might bar rivalry even with their elders. How very few of us, nevertheless, when the day for the competition positively dawned, would care to enter!

That is the difficulty—and the consolation—in all classes of self-deception, moral as well as mental, and under its many kaleidoscopic shapes. Outside observers can never be certain of the proportions in which it is simple playing with a pleasant conceit, and actual disease. I do not myself know many of the tribe of whom I could confidently affirm that they are wholly convinced at heart of their exalted ability. When supremacy in wit and wisdom, within their particular province, is challenged for a rival, it is true that privately they are apt to try his claims in scales where the weights are supplied by themselves. Those which his admirers offer they unhesitatingly condemn and break. For their own work they keep other scales and weights, bound to give satisfactory results. Often it may well be that they too have suffered similar relative injustice; that, if impartially balanced against favourites of fortune, they might have ranked higher than at present. But with it all they will generally feel that they are not quite the proper judges of their own appeal. They will be suspecting that in an interior chamber of their own, of which, like the Pisan Archbishop, they have thrown away the key, lies a set of uncompromising legal weights hidden away.

It is so; and more the pity. In the deadly struggle of arts and letters, and of professional life as well, how solacing were some self-deception! Indeed, how innocent! I am a little afraid to allege as much of self-deception in morals, though I am not sure even there. In the nature of things, fame, the gifts of fortune, genius, can fall to so few! May I add, perfect goodness, too? And the paths shaded by the trees on which those golden apples hang are trodden by so many! It would be most consoling, nay, encouraging, for the throng of undiscovered and unarrived geniuses and successes, the Never-to-be Lord Chancellors, Secretaries of State, Bishops, popular novelists, poets, and preachers, to be allowed to assure themselves that they deserve the rewards they are never likely to receive—if only, if only it were not that self-deception is so commonly self-suspicious!

THE MARRIAGE LOTTERY

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EVERYBODY knows, and most people have said, that marriage is a lottery. We all reckon the uncertainty of the results as among the inevitable accidents of human life. Men and women, in choosing their partners of the opposite sex, practically are obliged to select with reference to qualities not those with which they will have habitually to live. A man is captivated by a pretty face, eyes, complexion, gait, teeth, hair, nose, hand, waist, or instep. In the nature of things such charms are evanescent, unless when appertaining to Queen Alexandra. Often custom fades them. Sometimes they had already waned, leaving but a shadow. Or it may have been a touch on the piano; and a few months after the wedding the instrument is never opened. Even the fascination of a pleasant wit is reserved permanently for strangers. Middle age analogously was fabled in old stories to be in the habit of espousing the cook, who thenceforth was lost to the kitchen. The traps for the affection of a woman are at least as many, and with consequences perhaps more fatal. She falls a victim to the petits soins, which straightway fly off to another damsel. She may have been dazzled by the openhandedness, which

now sordidly scrutinizes the weekly bills, by the docility stooping or mounting to obsequiousness—mere electro-plate upon iron—by a buoyancy of temper, becoming passionate gusts diversified by fits of gloom.

These are all in the possibilities. So also, happily, are the counter contingencies, that the unamiable tendencies may after all never develop themselves, and that the union of two hearts will ripen a whole crop of unsuspected virtues. Where there remains a root of evil, compensatory good, as frequently as not, reveals itself. In any case a pair, and their relatives and friends, have in general themselves alone to blame if they have not discovered in time the drawbacks. The chances in my mind which have prompted me to write have no direct connexion with the ordinary sort. To begin, they have this peculiarity, that, with very rare exceptions, they affect women only. It is not that a girl constantly rushes into matrimony blindly; that she knows nothing really of the suitor; that, perhaps, nobody has warned her of defects in him; that, if informed, she either has disbelieved or has disregarded. When the likely results happen, she generally discovers in herself philosophy to bear them. At all events with such casualties—or certainties rather—I am not now concerned. I am supposing the rational case of an engagement, under conditions entirely sensible, to an agreeable adorer, in her own rank, of good health, and apparent ability to maintain her more or less

in accordance with the habits of the circle she has quitted.

She risks, with her eyes open, variations for the worse in health, temper itself, and a lover's worship. By the way, and somewhat cursorily, she is aware, and takes the chance of, a young household's liability to pecuniary difficulties. Hers will have been an exceptional home if she have not had occasional experience of them there. So far she is, or ought to have been, prepared. She must, on the other hand, be of a very unusual character if she have formed any definite notion of the extraordinary speculativeness of the prizes or blanks revolving for herself on Fortune's wheel. I can easily understand that, with anything like due affectionateness, she will entertain no doubt of the rights of the youth to whom she has promised herself. If a curate, he ought to be Archbishop of Canterbury; if at the Bar, to be Lord Chancellor; if a painter, to be always hung on the line; if a merchant's clerk, to be, all in good time, a Rothschild. I should myself have a poor opinion of her if she had the least idea of a basis for her hopes. An assay of the particular qualities and circumstances through which careers are made, and summits are reached, may be not beyond the powers of shrewd observers among kinsfolk and friends. It is unnatural for a woman young and loving to subject her wooer's character to an impartial and cold-blooded analysis.

Yet it is pitiful to think how vitally important for

the bride-to-be is the question of her bridegroom's future career, and how virtually helpless she is. Doubtless she can smooth the road by cheering him when depressed and weary. I pass by the possibilities of more direct assistance through the muster about herself of a Court of influential dispensers of patronage. The opportunities in this direction are rare; much rarer than the dangers incident to the enterprise. Commonly her duty and her wisdom are to wait, and to pluck up such courage as she may when her husband suddenly 'arrives', and she finds herself landed and stranded on the heights too. I do not mean that the man is without his part in her difficulty. It is not pleasant for him to feel how curious, and perhaps ever so little condescending, are his new associates—scarcely new to him—at having to welcome among them, and into their family circles, a woman who has not yet learnt to speak their language. He, however, suffers chiefly for her; she both for herself and him. Suffering I call it; and I make no question but that the splendour is torture to very many whom their neighbours and contemporaries have been envying for titles or palaces won for them, not by them. They are trembling painfully at the need to learn a multitude of unaccustomed forms and fashions, and at the certainty of the blunders they will commit.

That the errors are comparatively few attests the adaptability of the feminine nature to novel conditions. That the most jealous critic seldom indeed spies out symptoms in the enshrined parvenues of

disgust with the worship they have had nothing to do with compelling, shows how cleverly women dissemble. That few wives have been known to deprecate the acceptance by their husbands of honours which they of necessity share, simply proves how self-sacrificing is the sex!

A NEW LAW OF LIBEL

A NEW LAW OF LIBEL

A NOTORIOUS defect in the English law of libel is the refusal of protection against calumnies on posthumous reputation. Living persons have abundant security. They may be flagrant criminals, yet defy exposure in print, or by word of mouth. The moment the most upright and virtuous man is dead, his fair fame can be torn to pieces with absolute impunity.

Long since the scandal became apparent in all its absurdity to the Baratarian Legislature. The first and obvious suggestion was to assimilate the rights of the living and the dead. In some countries the plan has been tried, and continues to operate. Baratarians, however, are not as ordinary men. They looked at the whole question, round and about, up and down, back and front. It became clear to them that it would be a disparagement to their reputation to adopt any such rough and ready change. If characters were screened in life and death alike from scrutiny and censure, the due historical reprobation of vices and follies would be impossible. In life, to prevent ebullitions of open anger and discreditable brawls, it may be necessary to forbid under penalties the publication of candid opinions on the motes in

the eyes of neighbours. But it would be an offence against good morals to go on accepting indefinitely a tombstone epitaph on dead and gone scoundrels. There must be a way of public gibbeting, free from the objection of letting loose rancorous and malevolent tongues to wreak their base spite on the noble and worthy memories of the illustrious and the prosperous deceased.

After profound meditation, and weighty discussion, the islanders devised an alternative. They embodied it in a statute centuries old, but still in full force. By it a dead man's natural representatives are empowered to proceed criminally or civilly against libellers of their relatives. The penalties are even heavier and more condign on account of the accident of death. They certainly would, I am informed, be exacted with the greatest rigour were the Act ever infringed. As it happens, the occasion never arises, by reason of an addition, equally indispensable, to the libel law. I refer to a set of clauses by which a correlative and exclusive copyright privilege is vested in families themselves of libelling at discretion their departed ancestors.

For the sake of public policy, as I have intimated, somebody ought to speak the truth, without favour, of the dead. Strangers have no interest in doing it, unless from malice, which should be severely checked. Necessarily the duty rests with the surviving kinsfolk or representatives. There 755 Barat. Repub. C. 23. SS. A–G. leave it. By these articles children,

grandchildren, mothers-in-law—mothers-in-law in particular—nephews and nieces, grandnephews and grandnieces, brothers and sisters, with their wives and husbands, and first cousins, if not residuary legatees, are authorized, nay, are directed, to speak amply and frankly of their dear defuncts. If no relative will undertake the office, a cook, housekeeper, butler, man, or lady's maid, who has been not less than five years in the service, may intervene. Should a dispute arise as to the member of the domestic circle to perform the sad but pious task, the Baratarian Court of Probate decides. Two or more personal representatives may be appointed, to act independently.

For ordinary people, an obituary notice in the leading journal, or an inscription in the churchyard, clear and candid, is as much as can be provided. In memory of persons of any distinction, biographies in one, two, or three volumes are penned and published. The number of works inevitably is enormous. Possibly it may be thought that consequently Baratarian literature is not very lively. The inference is reasonably drawn from the lives of eminent Englishmen, which their children, chaplains, private secretaries, or hired scribes are in the habit of pitchforking on the public. Far be it from me to deny that these productions are abominably tiresome. But, from long study of Baratarian literature, I can state with confidence that no department of it excels the biographical in brilliancy and variety of entertainment.

In civilized lands it has always been the affectionate duty of the nearest relative to close the eyes, to assist at the disembowelling for embalming purposes, to light the crematory torch, to throw the clod on the coffin; anything to make sure that the end has really come! Analogously in Barataria it is the tender office of the mourners in the first degree to bury, burn, or eviscerate the character of the dead. Hardly is the breath out of the body before the work commences. Very possibly the administrator or other next of kin may not possess the requisite literary facility. Accordingly efforts are instantly made to retain a highly-trained literary ghoul. This personage at once proceeds to ransack what I will metaphorically describe as the rubbish-heaps and dunghills in the career of the deceased. His object is, while adhering strictly to the truth, to collect the raciest, that is, the most characteristic, particulars. He acts above all on the golden maxim that heroes are never heroes to their valets; and he is valet.

I should be deeply grieved if I were to be construed as meaning that the good and great and noble traits in nature and career were omitted, or depreciated. Far from it. Baratarian biographies, the most veraciously calumnious, overflow with notes of admiration. Exceeding emphasis is laid on the splendid qualities of the select vestryman, who in fact lectured on poetry, the Leader of the House of Commons intended by nature for a grocer, the

Commander-in-chief who was a born, an inspired drill-sergeant, the Prelate who would have made a most successful attorney. The beauty of routine, the sublimity of the commonplace, the triumphant escape, by a short head, from the vocation of a pickpocket or a courtesan, are doubly and trebly underlined. Kinsfolk and loving dependents who have dragged into the hot light every pettiness, the juvenile amourettes, the diverting greedinesses, the underhand manœuvres for mitre or ermine, the trickeries, the senile degenerations, the white lies, the slanderings, can afford to be fulsome concerning merits valued in life by nobody. But the scrupulosity of antiquarian eavesdropping, and the miniature fineness of tracery have a more appropriate object. Naturally they are reserved for details which an enemy or rival would be afraid or ashamed to score up against the man in life. Only the prying eyes of confidential intimacy have generally the means, and can claim the right, to stamp them posthumously and indelibly upon human memories.

The duty is not merely honourable; it is also highly lucrative. A very virtuous, a proverbially moral public man's biography, unmarketable elsewhere, is in Barataria worth a large sum to the sorrowing, and too often impecunious, widow and orphans. It is quite a property. Perhaps the fact helps to explain the present local condition of feeling on the matter. Island archaeologists asseverate that they have discovered traces of a disinclination among

the eminent of hoar antiquity for such posthumous revelations. Poor human nature! Even testamentary inhibitions seem for some time after the passage of the statute to have been tried with a view to screening humorous paternal and maternal weaknesses from affectionate parade and comment. Open attempts in that direction obviously were condemned by the Courts as against public policy. Yet thin-skinned testators long continued to endeavour by secret comminatory trusts to shrink inside their partially opaque shells. Happily the power of educated opinion, with the instinctive Baratarian deference for law, has gradually dissipated shy individual scruples. The certainty that there is money in an extended inventory of a conspicuous man's little failings has confirmed other influences. For several generations, I am credibly informed, no Baratarian of position has sought to restrain the completest display after death of his true and diverting traits. On the contrary, when any one has chanced to indulge the vice of registering his indiscretions in a stenographic diary, he invariably inserts in his will the key to his cipher.

So used are the honest islanders to the practice that they cannot comprehend how Englishmen are able to dispense with it. In vain have I striven to explain to them that our society papers, which labour to strip every vestige of privacy from life, leave nothing worth exposing after death. Such a violation of the right of domestic life to be lived domes-

tically appears to them simply atrocious. When I have proceeded to argue that after death itself any stranger who chooses to show the poor trite spectacle over again to the ignorant populace is equally at liberty to withdraw the veil, their indignation, far from being appeased, is aggravated. To their undisciplined, un-Europeanized, and un-Americanized minds it is nothing short of a monstrosity that rude alien hands should be allowed to dabble inside the sacred entrails of a Byron, a Dickens, a Thackeray, a Carlyle. That the world should insist upon knowing what sort of being a captain of men among them actually was, they deem pardonable and justifiable. But at least it should, they hold, be reserved for the scalpel of reverent affection to do the religious mangling, and conduct the obligatory autopsy.

How different are the points of view of different races—each with a full and equal faith in the perfection of its own!

TEMPER

TEMPER

Pessimists might preach a sermon on the popular corruption of the original meaning of the word 'temper'. Once it signified a due mixture of different qualities. Later it stood for an inclination of the balance one way or the other, according to the context. Still the tendency was towards right rather than wrong. A man of temper was one who kept the fire in him under habitual control. A further step was to determine the sense by a qualifying adjective, as good or bad. Then lastly the expression needed no addition to indicate a phase of human nature which would be better for control, and certainly does not get it. Without any warning prefix, to act like the old twist of straw on a bull's horns, we all know very well that a man at large with a temper is a dangerous animal.

Naturally the disposition admits of all sorts of degrees. At every one of them it is liable to impulses more or less furious. During these it is as unreasonable as the winds themselves. Not that, as I am aware, those really are capricious. Nor probably, in one sense, is temper. Like fierce currents of air, it also has its causes, though ethical meteorologists are not always very clever in distinguishing them.

At any rate, the individuals, its victims, whether apparently agents or patients, are popularly supposed not to have much relation to, or power over, its outbreaks. The tempest bursts without the least notice to anybody. A man may have been beaming all over, when, in a moment, the sky lowers, lightnings flash, and thunder growls. A paragraph in the newspaper about Timbuctoo may have annoyed the poor fellow. It may have been a casual expression in a letter from a relative, or a misspelling of his name. An egg at breakfast may have been over or under boiled. How the storm hurtles! At another time the flick of a duster may have brought down his wife's favourite Venice beaker a ruin on the hearth; and he will bear the affliction like an angel.

People not familiar with the person find the turmoil strange. Frequently it surprises himself. His common sense scolds him for it. He may know that he is imperilling the favour of an aged wealthy uncle; that he is laying up for his new work in the press a candid review by an able editor, who happens to be a fellow week-end guest. Or, worse still, blindly wounding his nearest and dearest, he stabs his own heart! I have met with cases where the frenzy has had a moment's lucid interval. During it the lunatic has summoned his will to apply the strait-waistcoat; but the will, untrained to rule, slinks out of the way, refusing to be mixed up in the squabble. Once upon a time I suggested to a deaf public the enactment of a quarter of an hour's grace

for gusts of unbridled temper. At every indulgence the object, if not inorganic, such as a chair, a table, a china jar—when the owner would undertake the office—was to be bound to present a formal paper to the temporary Bedlamite. It would contain a disclaimer of the fit of passion, and also an acceptance of liability under it, for his option. Apart, perhaps, from physical violence, a signature to the former would wipe the episode completely out. Perhaps, now that the Daylight-saving Bill has been so benevolently received, my modest interference with less lordly authorities than sun and moon might hope for consideration.

In default of legislation, which is, however gentle, an interference with liberty, a general voluntary application of the old copy-book advice to govern one's temper is worth everybody's while. It is, after all, not so impossible as affectionate family circles believe. Tempers not rarely have been controlled to an extraordinary degree. Bishops and others such have gone down to their graves without public notoriety that they had tempers at all. Wives and daughters kept confidence. Only outside connoisseurs remarked the paling lips, the wild-beast-like look about the eyes, the crisping fingers, the dilating nostrils. The discipline which has achieved some remarkable successes among the great of the earth, might doubtless be as profitably extended to us of the commonalty. In the first place, the unetymological fiction of a sort of natural right, which outsiders are bound to recognize, in an

individual temper to run wild should be relentlessly fought. I do not know that the world has any necessary concern with the spasm, apart from the ebullition. Really the emotion is a private matter. If it please a man to keep a furnace going inside, well and good, so that he do not let the contents of the pot upon it boil over. There may even be an occasional advantage in a fiery nature conducting a series of experimental explosions for its own behoof. But the effervescence becomes a nuisance to be suppressed, as well as an absurdity, when permitted or encouraged to steam and burst in the public view.

The exhibition often is so ridiculously inappropriate and inopportune that I am inclined partly to excuse it as a mere confusion of duties and vocations. Temper occasionally falls into a way of mistaking the province of anger for its own. They are entirely different things. Temper is at liberty after a sort to manufacture and send off fireworks strictly for its domestic diversion. Anger is a noble potentiality implanted in humanity for the scourging and branding of wrong and evil. It is crime which anger desires to lash rather than the criminal. When the chastisement becomes cruel, and personally vindictive, it is no longer anger which wields the whip, but temper. That has been making a raid beyond its rightful boundaries, and fighting under the generous passion's guise. The conditional Scriptural licence conceded to anger could not under either head have been granted to temper!

DE JURE *v.* DE FACTO

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To a large body of popular European opinion a century and a half ago nothing can have appeared more perverse than the adhesion of England to its de facto Hanoverian dynasty as against fealty to the heir of the de jure Stuart kings. A casual foreign frequenter of the two rival Courts may well have thought the rejection of a Knight of romance—when not in his cups—like Charles Edward, in favour of the second George a fit of midsummer madness. On the one side were visible chivalry, sympathy, gaiety, tolerance, patience in adversity, mercy in victory, the mien of a Prince who was above all a gentleman. The visitor to St. James's saw there enthroned pomp without splendour, boorishness and sulkiness, cupidity and parsimony, grossness in manners and morals. Yet the royalty de facto went on, ponderously solidifying its foundations. Meanwhile the lustre around the king of hearts continually dwindled. Long before he died, it was as it were clean forgotten that he was still a king de jure.

Not in kingship alone does the de jure confront reproachfully and unavailingly the de facto. Everywhere in the realm of memory there is wont to rise behind and over the thing done a shadow of the

doing as it might and should have been. The successful merchant is dogged at the end of his days by the hard bargains he has driven, by the advantages he ought generously to have waived. A triumphant general catches amidst the paeans welcoming him home echoes of dirges for hecatombs of victims that might have been spared. The popular preacher from his cathedral throne has a vision of Heaven opening above a mission priest dying saintly of typhus in a pest-ridden riverside parish, or martyred gloriously in the South Seas. A poet blushes for a thousand verses his shadow would have blotted. The statesman dreams he could have reached his goal by a straight road. The de facto always wears a seamed and scarred visage. A very commonplace de facto would it be were it without blemishes, or with none perceptible. Never was a conquest achieved without reminding the conqueror of means neglected which had a right to be used.

And the de jure in its turn—is it the perfect thing it looks, as viewed from the other side? Sometimes, if rarely, the boundary between the two is effaced. It enters into its inheritance. Best, usually, for its fame that it should have remained as it was. Its charms of pathos and romance seldom, I am afraid, stand the hard ordeal of an opportunity for translation into act. A Pretender, having by rough-riding over niceties of good faith vindicated his title, wishes in sickness that he could have his time to come over again. Once or twice in history the

sincerity of the contrition has been tested. Possession has been lost, to be once more regained; and the ingratitude and revengefulness of the de facto past have been doubled. Sentimental admirers of the de jure title are scandalized and outraged. The indignation is natural; and it is absurd. It is excusable, but preposterous, to attribute perfection to promise; and the de jure is that. Partisans fondly imagine the ideal and de jure in dynastic strifes to be identical, when, as a turn of Fortune's wheel now and again has demonstrated, the de jure is nothing but the de facto kept out of its presumed rights, and the worse for the deprivation. Self-love practises the same deception, and with results equally disappointing, upon the de facto possessor. He is apt to believe it to be only a caprice of circumstances that he has not embodied the de jure spirit at once so like and unlike his own.

The prayer against being 'Led into temptation', I dare say, here applies. For most of us it is better that we should be left with the fancy that, were we allowed a second trial, our de jure self in the air would oust our self de facto in the flesh, than that it should be put to the brutal proof. The Jacobite squires of the eighteenth century did no particular harm to Constitutional liberty. A sentimental devotion of their bumpers to the King over the water at any rate infused a little romance into their fox-hunting lives. A Presence before a man's mental eyes, picturing what he believes he was

meant to be—courageous, self-denying, gracious, a King in soul—will open vistas, though it may not transfigure. Here and there it may interpose to arrest a cruel word, even a vindictive deed. There are natures which, without consenting to change their essence, can see the value of a possession like an alternative spirit-self. If eventually they suffer an additional agony of remorse for having confessed to ownership of a treasure, and having wrapt it up in a napkin, so much the better!

THE ELDER SISTER

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I HAVE often thought, and continue to think, notwithstanding suffragette disorderliness, how much better mankind would have been organized had Adam been fashioned out of one of Eve's ribs rather than she from his. A brief priority in the dominion over nature would have been sufficient. Man could never have overtaken woman had she been allowed a fair start. Nature is exceedingly conservative and loyal. All its provinces, animal, vegetable, and even inorganic, having once experienced her skilful and sympathetic sovereignty, would have refused to acknowledge any other. Rebellion against womanly rule is always rare. Note in a family the condition of things where the eldest child is a daughter. Her precedence is lasting. Her brothers, when grown up, with households of their own, continue to recognize it. Such a home is eminent for courtesy, refinement, and the domestic virtues. This entire earth would similarly have profited by being launched under feminine auspices. In the first place, our Mother certainly would not have tempted her husband to eat that unlucky apple. Who ever heard of an elder sister in charge of a household acting as ringleader in a pillage of the jam cupboard?

It was Eve's sense of irresponsibility alone which betrayed her into the fatal indiscretion.

Man has always confessed his consciousness of the inherent superiority of Woman by his jealous efforts to repress her aspirations. The whole history of humanity testifies to a prevailing apprehension of the male that the female will shift the yoke. In the East he imprisons the women he insolently calls 'his' in harems. He cajoles them in the West with flatteries and vanities, that their taste for activity and energy in competition with him may be lulled asleep. Their numbers in primitive times, and still among savage races, have been kept down by massacres of female infants. Fashion and delicacy, set going by masculine cunning, forbade them to earn their living by honourable exertion, unless in the equivocal form of service to man. They were induced to believe that it was a distinction to be regarded as of clay too fine to be exposed to rivalry with man in the best paid vocations. A sort of religion was taught, that woman's supreme duty is to render herself agreeable to the other sex. Nature has carefully contradicted the absurd creed in all its articles. It is demonstrative that woman is sturdier than man in a host of ways. She works harder, when she has the chance. She bears pain more bravely. Female infancy holds to life more tenaciously. The woman child grows faster, is quicker to learn, is more amiable, has more tact, is more instinctively moral, industrious, and well behaved.

Woman's right to govern is indisputable. The difficulty is to explain why she does not reign de facto. Has she reigned in the past, and been deposed? Or are the characteristics which prove her actual title of gradual growth, and only now fully developed? I cannot accept the second hypothesis. All human qualities doubtless are results of evolution, but the masculine as much as the feminine; probably, to a larger extent. Woman from her province as mother must always have had her present tenderness, her capacity for boundless love and self-sacrifice. She was primevally, as still, fitted to be Lady of the Earth, and would exercise her prerogative. If once she ruled, how explain her occupation now of the second rank in the world's hierarchy? I have used the word 'deposition', and I desire to recall it. The sex, with its gifts, could not have been 'deposed'. Voluntarily it must have abdicated; and why? Manifestly it was by its own initiative; and still why? In view of woman's most distinctive quality in all ages I hazard the conjecture that it was an act of self-abnegation. She grieved over the rudeness, the boorishness, the grossness, of her subordinate partner. Her hope was that by reposing confidence in him, by compelling him to a sense of responsibility, she would elevate and 'humanize'. She lifted her consort from the gutter, and with her own hands crowned him king.

The chivalrous experiment did not succeed. Man, naturally a sulky and presumptuous animal,

imagined he had seated himself on the throne by his own merits. Nature, meaning his muscles for rough service, had given to him more of brute strength than to his more exquisitely-tempered mistress, and he used it to maintain his position. Far from availing himself of his supremacy to undertake the hardest tasks, he abused it to rob his benefactress. Think of the shameless atrocities he has perpetrated upon her throughout a large part of the earth! Even in lands which preserve some show of deference towards the better half of humanity, man constantly thinks of himself first. English common law, English statutes, testify in particulars, small and great, to the almost unconscious, and therefore more shocking, selfishness of the male sex. At first sight it is surprising that woman, with her dexterity, her insight and subtlety, her courage, and hatred of violence and cruelty in all forms, should have stood the usurpation. But the same phenomenon has perpetually been seen in the history of tyrannies. The start in revolt is uphill. In all such cases the victims are accessaries. Here the procedure must have been as in the converse instance of the supersession of Ninus by Semiramis. The King had resigned his sovereignty to his wife for a day; and she kept it for life. Woman experimented similarly on behalf of man, and has endured for ages. Indeed, 'endurance,' I am disposed to believe, suggests the true explanation. The experiment continues even yet. Woman constantly may be observed still, as when humanity in its present shape

commenced its course, watching for King Man to come meekly, crown in hand, and cast it at his sovereign Lady's feet.

It is a beautiful spectacle of faith and patience, though more satisfying to one sex than to the other. How long it will be visible anywhere, nobody can tell; for a multitude of women who would never resort to brute force, have tired of waiting. Men must not be surprised that, as in Bourbon France, a small minority has recently been striving to restore right by a burlesque of the Reign of Terror. A wiser section long since set to work according to the laws of war. It asserts itself freely, and has already stormed strong fortresses of masculine monopoly. One of the learned professions has been obliged to capitulate. It is almost a paradox that the Church and Bar remain closed to beings who are easy superiors in the gifts of tongues and arguing. Other combatants have engineered approaches to the Stock Exchange. All business men recognize qualities in women which render them formidable commercial competitors. It is an old tale how those who were licensed to do nothing else learnt long since the trick of journalizing, criticism, and story-telling. Among them the lost feminine birthright of government is fast being recovered. Men will soon have to drop down into the vacated services for which Nature always intended their intelligence, such as it is. The rougher callings in which muscular vigour and unwire-strung nerves are required are

yet open to them. While cool feminine scientific brains plan campaigns by sea and land in the world's Ministries, male soldiers and sailors will be translating them into act throughout the five divisions of the globe. In respect of special genius, even though masculine, the forethought of Nature in endowing males with superior palates to females is apparent. Honourable spheres have been reserved for such in myriads of hitherto ill-manned, or rather, ill-womaned kitchens.

I have admitted that the rightful heiresses have been kept too long out in the cold. But suffragettes and their masculine allies ought to recognize that privation and ill-usage are not without their advantages. Women who have always been their own masters are not the pleasantest to serve. Some of the qualities which endear the sex most were probably engendered, certainly ripened, during the period now closing. There are fruits—medlars, for instance—which require a touch of frost for mellowing. May not charm, the highest of all feminine properties, be of an analogous class? Certainly wheedling is; and what man has not cause to bless nature for having taught women that! Woman in her legitimate place of command would have had enough to do to keep man in his, without humouring his foibles and crotchets. Scarcely would she have had leisure or curiosity to study herself. While wandering thousands of years in the wilderness, she has trained herself to be a philosopher, and a wooer. An

unchallenged pursuit of the vocations hitherto usurped by man would not have thus enlightened her any more than it has enlightened him. But neither need the resumption of her sceptre obliterate experiences she has amassed during captivity. On that some of us mere men are hopeful, and almost sanguine. Let it be a point of honour of emancipated woman to justify our prevision!

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF LIFE

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THE chief use of libraries is to furnish more or less damp-proof receptacles in which stacks of replies to the question can be safely stored, and forgotten. One solution of the problem, however, if not a complete, or universal, or the only answer, rarely has had sufficient stress laid upon it. Few certainly of the most active leaders of human industry appear to appreciate in the least its vital importance.

The common mental attitude towards the work we are obliged to do in order that we may subsist —even towards work which we have undertaken voluntarily, and from choice—is, that it is something to be done for the sake of something else. The something may be money to live by, or lay up for the maintenance hereafter of ourselves or ours. It may be glory, or the satisfaction of our conscience in charity. Native aptitude, or liking, for the work makes no difference. In any case the kind of feeling is that when it is over we are entitled to take our pleasure; that we must wait till then to enjoy ourselves. A worker is not accustomed to wrap himself up in the working; to hug himself in it; from time to time to fondle it from sheer content, as a strong,

sound farm horse rolls upon a meadow he has been mowing all the week, into which he has been turned out on a July Saturday night. But that ought to be his mood. Any other strips life of more than half its bloom. The distinction ought never to be between work and pleasure as contraries. It should be merely between one description of work and another; between one sort of pleasure and another; or between pursuance of one sort, and its cessation.

I am not propounding the paradox that work could always have the breath, the atmosphere, of pleasure playing through, and on it. Work often is harassing and exacting; sometimes, from its own nature, it is cruel. More usually the cause is in external conditions, necessarily or not, imposed upon it. In the highest, the finest, the brain itself insists upon straining endurance to breaking-point. Precisely the same tendency is observable in so-called pleasures. The romancer, the statesman, the athlete, has the right to leave off; he ought; he will not; perhaps, he cannot. Occasionally, I am obliged reluctantly to admit, labour may be too grinding, too continuous, to let a ray of pleasure warm and illuminate its course. Ordinarily, I am sure, in this wealthy, fortunate land of ours, it might be, and is, at any rate in quantity, so tolerable as to yield leisure enough for most toilers to stand aside, and be aware of their own sensations with respect to it. In the vast majority of occupations the sole element wanting, I verily believe, to a perfect consciousness

of the satisfaction—which is pleasure, even joy—in their due accomplishment, is the will to recognize the fact.

My moral applies, I am convinced, as well to the most commonplace vocations, as to those accounted among the least mechanical. The least share with the most intellectual in the supposed curse of necessary drudgery. To the loftiest that necessity is a saving constituent, a positive blessing. The most learned historian of our time took his pastime in correcting proofs of other men's writings as well as his own. An energetic Primate liked to tidy up his own library. A bricklayer, as he lays his bricks, might, and ought to, delight in the accuracy with which each row is set, no less, in proportion, than the great advocate in hammering his point of law into a captious judge's head, than a poet in realizing a floating, elusive inspiration. Nothing in general but a bad negative habit stands in the artisan's way. All that is wanting is the removal of an artificial, almost a sentimental impediment; the establishment of a determination to let nature have her way. When this elementary truth is actually understood, or rather reinstated, common human life will have taken an assured step towards Paradise. How admirable then will be the work, how delightful living, how lovely, at its close, the retrospect!

MEMORY

MEMORY

METAPHYSICIANS and psychologists profess to explain the methods of working of various mental faculties. If their solutions often were not mutually contradictory, and at the same time equally plausible, I might be disposed to think that among them they had been fairly successful. But Memory baffles them. I have never seen any probable key to the process by which it operates. The results alone we can observe; and they are marvellous. To judge from them it might be supposed to resemble a photographic film, which automatically prints everything submitted to it. The result is a miscellany extraordinarily heterogeneous; the sweepings of a life's experiences. The length of the period covered, and the multiplicity of details, may seem to vary with different minds. All individual testimony to limitation, however, is constantly being falsified. An incident not recalled since it happened many years before suddenly flashes in all its details out of the shadows and darkness of the past. It must have always been there, biding its time. A single fact of the sort is sufficient evidence that it is possible to appear to have forgotten, while it is manifest that we had always remembered. Many of us can testify that long bygone particulars

have occurred to us of which we were not aware we had taken the most transient cognizance. I should not myself be surprised to learn hereafter that nothing, important or trivial, passes before the mind's eye without a complete reflection having been thrown off, and laid up for convenient or inconvenient reproduction.

A common assumption is that the taking and hoarding are confined to the contents of books, to words, to the chronicling of deeds, other men's and our own, to thoughts and feelings. The accumulation is not at all restricted to such subjects. Memory is not handmaid, mistress, or partner, of the eyes and ears alone. Tastes are remembered, and smells, and touch. Everybody can remember, so as to hear, and feel, the sound, agonizing, of the wood of an ill-cut pencil on a slate. I remember the gritty-sweet flavour of the magnesia and rhubarb which preserved me in boyhood to afflict in age my few friends and readers. I can smell with a sense of charm the salts in my mother's church-going vinaigrette, and, with a feeling more mixed, though not altogether of disgust, the open-drain odour which on my first Continental tour accompanied me throughout from and back to Calais. Every sense has its own specific registrar; and each appears to myself to exhibit the same involuntary, unbidden, and promiscuous fidelity.

Really I do not know whether to feel pride or shame when I contemplate the boundless range of

memory's operations. Nature might be supposed to have had an amazing respect for the indefiniteness of the value of human energy in view of the provision made for the lasting record of its legion of harlequin phases. The scale of the supply of machinery is like that of an invading army, which sets forth furnished, as was Napoleon's at Boulogne, down to all the materials for publishing its anticipated triumphs. In one aspect the forethought of nature is highly flattering; in another I am more disposed to blush, when the apparatus sets itself at work to return to me the taste of the jargonelle peardrop I sucked in my childhood. The fact is, nature is an architect proud of the genius to build with perfection, sublimely careless of the worth of future occupants of the palaces raised. Frequently it seems as contemptuous of the question of their convenience. Poets and philosophers from the days of patriarchal Job have bewailed the insensibility of physical nature to the sufferings its tempests, volcanoes, and floods cause to man. Similarly memory cares not a jot whether its workings savour of beneficence or the reverse.

I dare say I have been talking as if I thought that, as is a prevalent supposition, memory had a moral being, had a purpose in the manner of its working, and a temper; as if it were a reasoning faculty. As a mere minister of independent faculties, it exercises functions with a certain consistency of their own. If itself one, it would be a mass of eccentricities;

even of contradictories. In the popular view of it, nothing indeed is so powerful; and nothing is weaker. It reflects a busy lifetime at a drowning man's momentary glance; and often it cannot recall the name of the month. It engraves on brass the fancies of a child, and passes a sponge over the triumphs of manhood. It may be virtually boundless in a dullard, and shamelessly treacherous, brittle, and feeble in a sage. It is by turns omnivorous and fastidious; a model of intelligent method and an automaton. In general, whatever objects are committed to its care it guards indifferent to their number, and inviolably. Some the most vehement entreaties or threats apparently will not persuade it to store. It can, as if at will, convert itself into a sieve, taking a malicious pleasure in the transformation. On the other hand, as often as not, through a noxious retentiveness, it plays the enfant terrible, the âme damnée, the Mrs. Malaprop, the Marplot, the Kill-joy of Humanity. Hosts of us would gladly seal up multitudes of bygones in cells, and forbid them ever to be opened. Suddenly wide fly the doors, and spectres issue, threatening, shaming. Had memories any palpable surface at which they were amenable to maltreatment, what a dog's life would many a one of them lead!

Very much, if not the whole, of the seeming inconsistency has no existence. A trick of thought as well as of speech is to refer to Memory and Recollection as synonymous. They are names of different

mental organs, powers, or departments. Memory does not habitually exercise activity, volition, discretion, or any functions to which responsibility attaches. A repository, more or less passive, it cannot ordinarily refuse to accept and keep whatever the mental vision stamps for storage. The faculty, active and discriminating, which reviews, marshals, and evokes the contents is Recollection. Mind lays up in Memory for future use experiences of life, as industry accumulates spare labour under the form of wealth. Continually it is dispatching Recollection to cash, as it were, its savings for daily use. Recollection works in as many fields as Memory. As there is a department of Memory for every sense, so there are respective agencies of Recollection, however rarely most are carried into action. So bountiful, almost to prodigality, is Nature! Memory and Recollection alike are constituents of the congeries which makes up a single being, the Man, the Ego. They vary in that Memory possesses something akin to a physical, a corporeal, element. Recollection is more spiritual, and therefore more directly represents the Ego. It sallies forth, as if commissioned by that, to unseal and utilize the hoards of Memory.

The work is by no means always easy, and is never mechanical. Memory, being what it is, has not the capacity for recognizing duly that it was designed to do suit and service to mind as a storehouse. In elect characters such as Macaulay's it may, apparently from childhood, have been so drilled as to become

instinctively methodical and systematic, with every particular in its place, from the Iliad to a conversation or monologue of Miss Bates's. Recollection in these but touches a key, and an entire orchestra strikes up. For the most part the superior faculty is obliged to run searching about here and there. The original impression may have been faint. Recollection with difficulty is able to recover the outline. It is hard to apportion the blame exactly. Subjects may have been in fault for having failed to offer themselves in a way to rouse attention; or Memory may have let its surface for the moment be accidentally ruffled. Often I am tempted against my better judgement to conclude that, however apparently passive, that has, as have other kinds of passive creatures, its likes and dislikes. Thus in one man it may affect dates or names; in another it might be supposed to abhor them, while it has engraved indelibly all the petty events of a lifetime.

But can a faculty little above a schoolroom's blackboard show temper? Everybody must have remarked near resemblances in its or its partner's behaviour to human obstinacy, malice, even malignity. The mimicry of childish freakishness suggests a species of freewill. How many of us have begun an introduction of two friends, when we found we had forgotten one of the names! Few, if any, of these aberrations are, I believe, really to be imputed to Memory. It is the partner which has been playing their common master an ill turn. Recollection

undoubtedly feels and acts. It may resent having been disturbed in its repose. It may wish to remind a man how absolutely it has him at its mercy. Having once forgotten a well-worn fact, it amuses itself thenceforth with making a practice of jumping over. Anybody may be troubled at such a lapse, from the fear that a habit of forgetting the identical matter is in process of being contracted. So it is—only more clearly without the connivance of its associated inferior, and also with a more direct intent to annoy—when Recollection indulges its fondness for trespassing on fields of Memory which it has been strictly forbidden to enter. Who of us has not whistled the runaway back, only for it to return with, between its teeth, some ill-conditioned, shabby, evilly smelling, long-buried fact to lay at our feet—and this when smart company of self-conceits is with us! Its excuse probably would be that it is acting the part of Conscience when it is just a busybody!

Yes: reminiscences are not necessarily gay; and their mute warder, that we style Memory, being my primary theme, I have felt bound to relieve it from obloquy not its due. Let it and Recollection keep their respective burdens. Each can well afford to bear its own. Survey human life in the light as well as shade which the pair cast. What a cheerless barren wilderness would the whole scene be without them both! Not an emotion stirs us but summons Recollection to beat the bounds of Memory, that a feeling of the past for comparison, contrast, repres-

sion, stimulus, may be recalled. Thought echoes back to thought. Act visibly, palpably crowns, or is condemned and cancelled by, a long procession of doings supposed to be done with. The past claims part of every particle in our being; and Recollection, hauling its materials from Memory, is the master-builder of the present. Try to imagine the working of the two; and the brain reels in dizziness at the effort to realize its immensity. It is all but impossible even to label and date a single process. We suppose often that we are freshly and originally remembering, when we are only recollecting a recollection. It may seem comparatively simple to watch the start and appraise results. But we speedily find that psychology has devised no Röntgen Ray to reveal to us the flight of Recollection on its mission to unlock Memory's magazines, or how and where the stores it is requisitioning have been gathered and are warehoused.

Addiction to the use of metaphors is a common infirmity of ignorance. If readers thus account for the multifariousness of them here, I shall be the last to complain. I will save them the pain of scavengering. I have spoken of Memory as a photographic film which prints, and reflects, and paints—as a storehouse and furniture repository—as a bank—as a school-room's blackboard; and of Recollection as galloping over Memory's happy hunting-grounds—as conductor of its orchestra; as drill-sergeant to dress its ranks; as picking its locks; as quarrying in

it for materials wherewith, as master-builder or architect, to construct palaces, sometimes caravanserais, sometimes prisons and mortuaries; and not rarely as itself a mutineer, trespasser, and accomplice in mischievous practical jokes. Without this way of treating by analogies, it is in truth almost impossible to deal with the particular topic. An inquirer, all adrift, is compelled to snatch at such casual images to represent to his mental eye how the several faculties operate. The metaphors which he perforce borrows from visible, tangible objects, answer more or less satisfactorily their immediate purpose. Regarded either one by one, or all together, they picture, he knows very well, what, could he vivisect an actual man, he would see to be much more fantastic and unreal than the clumsiest caricature; to be a chimera, an impossible monster. Even the partition I have hazarded of Memory, commonly so called, between a passive quality bearing the name, and an active—Recollection—is, I am aware, open to criticism for narrowness. If every sense is accompanied by its several Memory and Recollection, why stop there? Has not every section of the spirit and body too, down to the minutest, a right to a Memory and Recollection of its own? Could not each call witnesses enough to its title? Ask a martyr to gout if he would deny the twofold power of Remembrance to a finger, a toe! Verily we are strangely and wonderfully made!

AUGUST 29, 1905

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A DATE to be marked in white in the world's annals. Europe and Asia breathed again at the close of the dire wrestling-match between Russia and Japan. A blood-and-fire struggle for two empires, it had involved dangers more insidious for neutral but interested nations. To look on, to make a ring, to cheer the fighters, while the spectators are themselves safe from wounds and privations, must have a brutalizing tendency. At home, in the countries directly concerned, the harm will have been more or less counteracted by sympathy with suffering or imperilled kinsmen, as well as by the burdens of war taxes and patriotic anxieties. Even then I do not myself believe in the equality of good with the ill. But I entertain no doubt at all of the balance of evil for ourselves, to whom, for a year and ten months, the struggle was popularly understood here to spell nothing but gain.

To be spectators of any war as if of a gladiatorial show, is a diversion worse than the worst at the old cockpits. The risk to the delicacy of the moral fibre is intensified when selfish interest is, or is believed to be, added to the excitement of the contest. Individuals are pauperized by gifts of money they

have not earned. Analogously nations are demoralized by gathering, or expecting to gather, spoils of war which they have not won with their own right arm. In the two years many Englishmen, though far from being philo-Russians, must have blushed often for the open exultation among us at Japanese bloody victories by sea and land. I think we might blush still more hotly at the regret which, while the question of peace, or continued war, wavered in the scales, not a few hardly affected to dissemble for the possible battles yet unfought. I am myself entitled to feel shame for British public opinion, as having been particeps criminis. At each fresh Japanese triumph I know I distinctly felt another wave of Russophobia rolled back; more chestnuts plucked for us out of the fire by alien fingers. Only, I had at least the grace to acknowledge the cheapness of a patriotism without sacrifices.

It may, I know, be argued that we paid for our entertainment, for the supposed incidental relief to the empire, by keeping the lists, with the attendant international risks. Had France, Germany, or even China, intervened on the side of Russia, we had bound ourselves by our treaty with Japan to do as much for her. I do not believe that the course of popular sentiment here was ever troubled by the contingency. Had the case occurred I am certain that the honourable necessity would in the first place have aroused a storm of surprise, and, possibly, consternation. At all events, it would need a bold

prophet, whether English or Japanese, to predict the exact manner in which stipulations such as those of the Convention could be carried out. How is a State on terms of complete, perhaps fraternal, kindliness towards another, to fly at that other's throat because the other has come to be on bad terms with a third? A Cavour or a Bismarck would find difficulty in realizing the precise modus operandi. War must be reduced to a game of chess before a nation could endure to have its tens of thousands slaughtered on a tented field without pulses having beaten, in the homes which sent them forth, one throb faster with indignation at the enemy opposed to them.

Happily for Japan, she has no occasion to speculate too anxiously as to the particular horn of the dilemma, created by the Convention, on which her Ally will prefer to impale herself, so long as she keeps alive on her hearth the clear, clean fire burning throughout the late struggle. I am sure we ought to feel no satisfaction at the temper with which, sitting secure, at our ease, well out of cannon range, we watched the demolition, at the cost of torrents of foreign blood, of a century-old scarecrow, a straw-stuffed colossus. But in common with the whole civilized world we have been taught by the issue of the terrible struggle an essential lesson; one of vital value to champions of national independence everywhere. Japanese successes are traceable to a simple rule. It is that

soldiers and sailors going into action with a quiet and inflexible resolve not to come out unless as conquerors are invincible. Other States keep brave forces, which will fight so long as there is hope. When there is none, small blame to the individuals if they consent to accept their lives. No blame at all, so long as war remains a pastime of kings and Music Halls! When it is recognized as lawful for nothing short of the defence of a people's existence, every combatant is bound to stake his own upon the issue. Each Japanese soldier and sailor believed himself the custodian of the honour and fate of his native land. The wonders we have known in Manchuria and the neighbouring seas are the result.

PUTTING THE BRAIN INTO COMMISSION

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A GERMAN—Professor of Caribbee at Oxford—travelling in China to collect monosyllabic manuscripts for a Cincinnati man about to found a university in Alaska was entertained in a great Buddhist monastery in the heart of the empire. Exploring the riches of its library, he came upon a curious testimony to the well-known historic fact that every Western invention was used and disused by the Celestials thousands of years B.C. He discovered a rough facsimile—only more so—in the Chinese language and characters, of every Londoner's week-day morning's leading newspaper. On the stranger's expression of surprise that he had never met with journals of the kind during his tour, the monk attending on him remarked that the 'peine forte et dure of the Press' had long been discontinued. Further inquiry by the puzzled savant elicited that the boasted journalism of latter-day Christendom had been anticipated by a Chinese artist in torture. After employment for some ages that species of screw had been abolished by the benevolent Emperor Hoang Chung Ho, of the thirty-fifth dynasty, as too severe.

I have never seen a copy of this anticipation of an

English morning paper. Being no Chinese scholar I could not have read it. But I can easily credit a compassionate autocrat with having banished it from his model prisons. I should have done the same myself. In view of a profession I long followed, in my unregenerate days, I am aware I may be likened to the crossing-sweeper who, on giving up business for the day, brushes the mud over the stones. I am not ashamed of the parallel. The honest fellow desires to save possible trespassers from a temptation to invade the sacred rights of property. Conscience similarly rules me, and more consistently. In pity to brains it urges, compels, me to warn against newspaper-reading.

Recollect what it means. Each morning the world is spread before you in detail. As of course, you are rushed through. It is easy to say you will not go; your brain has been strapped to the back of an express engine, and go it must. What can you care, what ought you to care, what do you care, about ninety-nine hundredths of the contents of any first-class journal? The brain nevertheless has to try to pull up at every paragraph to know whether it care or not. Not one stoppage without reasonable cause. What! No interest in Newfoundland, our oldest colony, which sends us cod and fog! None in its change of Government at the crisis of the sore, which might be rubbed into a carbuncle, about the French shore, with its French fish-curers! We may attempt to slur over political disorders in Russia;

but suppose they affect the wheat trade, and the price of bread! At any rate, if we run a motor, or read by oil lamps, we are concerned in troubles at Batoum. Crete is tindery; and a first cousin three times removed is, or was, stationed there at a handsome salary. Shut your eyes, if they will let you, to a Presidential struggle across the Atlantic, to a millionaire's murder in Paris, to unearthings of bronzes in Sparta, of crown jewels of prae-Mosaic Pharaohs in Egypt. At all events there is your own London for you; perhaps, even your own Little Peddlington; and you must mind that!

A thousand and one topics day by day are started. One and all appeal for your attention, to your sympathies, your antipathies. If you resolutely deny their claims, they insist that you shall examine them in order to prove your right to stand aloof. Could the beats of the nerves be recorded, the dilations and contractions of the grey matter in the cells of the head, the study of a single newspaper would be found to have wasted an amount of energy which might have driven an electric brougham round Hyde Park, or inspired a minor poet. Omnibus horses, when there were such creatures, died, not of their honest trots to and fro between Bayswater and the Bank, but of the murderous reinings-up to land ladies at the mercers' shops or windows in Oxford and Regent Streets. Virtually the brain is equally strained by its abrupt

halts at legions of items in the particular journal which runs it.

Modern journalism, from the moment it came into being, cultivated a habit of starting abrupt demands upon the native emotions and passions of the public. Of late years it has wantonly added to them from a mischievous trick it has caught of goading, each its own people, into biting its thumb at every other. But the special grievance upon which I am now insisting is the mere everyday frittering away of thought-power. Each particle in the whole mass may be harmless. Most of them, if minds had leisure to bestow on them, possess real interest. It is room to store, and appetite to feed moderately and healthily upon them, which are wanting. I have read of a physician who, finding prescriptions of no avail with a valuable gourmandizing patient threatening felo de se from over-fed gout in the stomach, invited him to dinner. It was an epicure's feast, and was thoroughly enjoyed. At the sideboard stood a servant, who ladled into a great glass bowl an exact repetition of every helping. Finally it was exhibited to the invalid as a faithful likeness of his unfortunate interior. A newspaper reader treats his intellectual digestion analogously; as if it were a pig's, without the excusing and saving gastric juice. Poor creature, he has not my more sensitive ancient Chinaman's safeguard in a natural aversion from such a surfeit. He finds the olla podrida malignantly flavoursome. Actually he fancies he is being

nourished. Like the great Freetrader, he swallows his copious morning draughts of churned-up Thames or Mersey gossip, and pities the thirsty dwellers beside the Ilissus and Cephisus!

Journalism flatters its sheep with the ridiculous assumption that the human brain is gifted with infinite expansibility. In reality the room at its disposal is extremely limited, as even Cromwell's skull will show. The deception would have been immediately exposed had not the victims connived. Brains, with rare exceptions, have a natural objection to genuine exercise. They much prefer the inconvenience of being asphyxiated at home by an excess of lodgers to the labour of doing a day's honest turnip-hoeing in the open. A mind at the end of a couple of hours' news-collecting from its swarm of gossip-pickers is as contented as if it had been aerating itself in the sun and breeze. Then it goes to sleep, and apoplectically snores. The truth is that it is utterly fagged; and what for! My friend and teacher, Mark Pattison, knew it was all for nothing, and carefully kept his curiosity from temptation. Reserving the best of his thinking for his own use and improvement, in his most fruitful years he would allow no morning newspapers within reach of his eyes or ears till evening. Perhaps, he may appear to have been a little inconsistent in not confining them for good and all; only, I dare say he had tried; and they broke loose; for they are unruly, self-willed, and disorderly animals in the house even of a philo-

sopher! None should know that better than myself, who, after using up the pick of my own poor brains in making mince-meat of others, persist daily in offering spontaneously the sediment to the like treatment by my juniors, several of them once my colleagues, and still my friends!

THROUGH WHOSE GLASSES?

THROUGH WHOSE GLASSES?

HISTORIANS and biographers commonly are obliged to trust for their characterizations of public men to the reports and views of others. Where, as less usually, they possess opportunities for learning a man's estimate of himself, they are inclined to set little store by it. That always is a great mistake. Biased the judgement may easily be; but not necessarily more so than extraneous testimony. At all events, it is at first hand. Granted that in general it is meant for an apology, a prisoner's pleading before the jury of posterity; it is at least of equal weight with the verdicts of enemies, or of ignorant bystanders. At the worst it will contain materials for its own refutation or correction.

Thus, I should like exceedingly to hear Ahab and Jezebel—especially the Queen—on the subject of Elijah, Elisha, and Jehu. I can conjecture the line of defence in the matter of the vineyard to have been that the crime of Naboth and the opportuneness of his conviction for the squaring off of the Palace grounds were a mere coincidence. Certainly Appius Claudius, the austere law reformer, would have given a very different account of the alleged rape of Virginia from that concocted by the riotous

assailants of his Ten Tables. Tiberius, I have little doubt, could have adduced abundant evidence that in his island solitude he spent his whole self on the cares of empire. Indeed, in my youth I proved it in print to my own complete satisfaction. How Cromwellian is his brain-torn epistle to the Senate! No sensualist's letter that—rather the groan of an Atlas beneath the burden of a world! Tacitus, pining for bygone Republican Rome, saw nothing in Nero but an enthroned wild beast. And such he was; yet something besides. Pacing the Palatine, once centre of a gorgeous city risen, at the Imperial touch, from its ashes—themselves accidental, as I can well believe—I have heard a wail from out the ruins: 'What an artist perishes in Me!' A Julian deciphered by himself, and to himself, would cease to be 'the Apostate'. Indignant at the abuses, the wranglings, the hair-splittings, of Churchmen's dogmatism, he would become the reformer, restorer, of a purified worship of God Almighty.

Imagine, as unfolded by the authors, Hildebrand's scheme of a Crusade against a camp of Teuton Barons masquerading as the Holy Roman Empire —à Becket's against a feudal despotism. Picture the surprise—no, not surprise, sardonic amusement—of Louis the Eleventh, the idealist, the believer in a band of guardian saints, the reconstructor of a France out of a chaos of bloody fragments, at his caricature in 'Quentin Durward'! Not less enlightening would be the third King Richard's

unravelling of the Lancastrian fable of the murders in the Tower. Our eighth Henry would, if interrogated, put a very different from the popular complexion on the motives for his breach with Rome. I am sure that Philip the Second, on his gridiron of the Escurial, died not ill satisfied to have devastated Spain, the Netherlands, the Indies, in return for the prospect of a brass-bound Heaven. The first Charles doubtless conceived he was a martyr no less in his Palace of Whitehall when deserting Strafford than when he himself mounted the scaffold in front of it. Is there no word of pitying admiration for his wrong-headed second son's heroism in staking three Crowns on the forlorn hope of winning them back to what he thought was the Kingdom of Christ? Charles of Sweden, in his lifelong duel with Peter, so called the Great, I am ready to credit, was to himself no mere swashbuckler, no brute gladiator, such as poetry, and even history, have chosen to portray him. He may well have had an intuition of a task set him to crush in the egg the cockatrice of Muscovite aggressiveness. Would that, for the sake of Europe, and twentyfold for that of Russia, he had completed the work! And the whipping-boys of fiction—how cruelly hard upon them never to be given a chance of cross-appeals against their creators! Ought not Squeers to be allowed to plead his starved old age in proof that the diet at Dotheboys Hall was liberal in proportion to the profit he had made out of it? Might not Pecksniff himself have plausibly

complained of having, after living past middle life decorously upon nothing at all, been turned out on a scoffing world, for no very apparent crime, to make a Dickens holiday !

Apart from researches into the motives of such historical personages, private life would gain greatly by similar treatment. A careful and sympathetic registration from the doers' own mouths of the transactions in which they have figured, would serve the cause alike of truth and of household morals. The task of the reporter is easy enough. He need not watch painfully for his opportunity. Ordinarily a family could without difficulty draw from the fountain-head, if it pleased, overflowing autobiographical streams. Unfortunately a habit is apt to be contracted of letting the precious liquid water the sands. Every wife, husband, parent, child, especially every daughter, has had, and has neglected, hundreds, thousands of occasions. It is not that relatives and acquaintances are under an obligation to believe all they hear. It is lawful and proper to listen with the tongue in the cheek, if the one be courteously small, and the other proportionately large. But at all events let the man have his say. Not to encourage personal revelations, even bragging, means irreparable waste of many a providential opening for improvement of the ancestor or friend by pinning him to his own declared standard of excellence. Whenever he seems in danger of growing slack, less morally courageous, less

magnanimous, less thrifty, less open-handed, less immaculately virtuous and honourable in any direction, than his relatives might know him from his own lips to have been in the past, I can imagine nothing more simple, respectful, and flattering, more profitable and renovating, than to hold up to the slipping exemplar, of whatever sex and age, the archives of his or her own sayings and doings as self-treasured and self-proclaimed.

CUPBOARDS

CUPBOARDS

King Edward the Seventh, of Happy Memory, among the first acts of his worthy reign, visited a model workhouse. After sampling, with high approval, the broth, and the rest of the institutions, he asked: 'Where are the cupboards?' Fresh to the bitter experience of sovereignty he had already learnt to ache with the craving for cupboards. He scarcely needed the answer. The question, levelled at the lot of Princes as of Paupers, was like a bomb-shell to Guardians and Overseers. Scarcely comprehending, they replied: 'There are none!'

Cupboards in a workhouse! As inconceivable there as in the State rooms of Buckingham Palace! The idea is destructive of the entire basis of organized air-tight, externally-impervious, internally-self-ventilated, rate-and-tax-supported establishments. They are meant to be all above-board and bare, all open to critical inspection. No messy snuggeries, no hiding-places for soiled and tattered hearts, is the proud official boast; the whole one miscellaneous swept and garnished depository for the wards of the generous public!

Quite right, too, for cupboards as they are; but how hereafter, when it shall have been found

possible to modify the insupportableness to the mind of institutional Authority of the large idea of a cupboard as it should be? Cupboards are not inconsistent with decency and order. On the contrary, a cupboard is particularly bound to be methodical. In default of system it becomes worse than a scavenger's cart; as happens also occasionally with too self-confidential a nature. Under proper conditions it smells of lavender and spices. That it is banned, is proof of incapacity in the ruling power. Its absence does not shut out from an institution the ne'er-do-wells, but only the honest scapegoats of fortune. If they starve to death rather than enter, the reason is just the official banishment of cupboards; for the fastness, the retreat, the last to be surrendered, of virtuously human foibles, is the longing for a cupboard. If with a well-worn, tidy skeleton inside, why not?

INSINCERITIES

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INSINCERITIES

Every one must or ought to feel it extremely difficult to be sincerely sincere, really real, even to himself, in the privacy of his heart, not to say journal. Readers, book-worshippers, abound. What a host of works they tell themselves they love without a word of truth in the assertion. How many of the professing worshippers have never felt their hearts glow over the Georgics, the Odes of Horace, Shakespeare's Sonnets, Samson Agonistes, the Pilgrim's Progress, Sir Roger de Coverley, Burns, Shelley, Waverley, The Excursion, Romola? We return from art galleries at home and abroad in ecstasies. Is it a genuine passion for the Dwarfs of Velasquez, Rembrandt's ugly Jews and Jewesses, Tintoretto's acres of Scripture, Court, and battle-scenes, Titian's repainted Assumption, Raffaelle's half-painted Transfiguration, the spectre of Leonardo's Last Supper? Do Michael Angelo's Moses, the Apollo Belvedere, stir a palpable emotion? What of Bach's Passion music? Do we thrill on entering St. Paul's, even St. Peter's? What is our true feeling now about Gladstone's oratory?

Many of us, I hope, are fortunate in being, and having, excellent friends. Is the kindliness a passion?

Does it often, ever, approach to that state? Is it on a level with self-love? However much faith in specific Christian dogmas may have decayed, the belief in our Father in Heaven, in personal immortality, survives, and will survive. Let the believer catechize himself on the character of his faith; how far the spirit of it is positive, active. For myself, I have been inclined to apprehend that, if it were, it must scorch us up; that in the intense fire of its celestial glory we could not be continuing to breathe upon earth. Perhaps some day flesh and Heaven will be reconciled. Perhaps that will be the phœnix-like Day of Judgement—though less of judgement upon, than a rapture of, forgiven, purified, and inspired legions of men from a dissolved earth into Heaven, before God the Father's throne!

If we feel that we are very far from any such ethereal transformation, a cause may be found in the scarcity of personal sincerity. Most of us would be reduced to a terrible tenuity of emotional, sympathetic faith in things and beings external to ourselves, were we not able to admire co-operatively and vicariously. Human beings live a double life. They are individual men; and they are Man. They are, one and all, their separate selves; and they are also the particular society of which they are enrolled members. In their corporate selves, without being fully conscious of the distinction, they may, and after a manner sincerely, love a multitude of objects for which most of them individually have no positive

affection. I know that ordinarily it is so with me; and it accounts more or less for my surprise when I catechize myself on the genuineness of enthusiasms, which I am obliged to entertain, and am unable to enjoy.

This capability of communal interest in things deserving it belongs to all societies and all generations. After its kind it may be sincere. It is to be hoped that it is particularly sincere in the present; for without it at present there would, I fear, be, as I have intimated, little sincere enthusiasm of any sort. Men appear to me to be able now more than ever to admire, to appreciate, without loving. They go through the process rationally, even conscientiously, with their brains. Their hearts are unconcerned. That is what I mean when I speak of the dearth of sincerity. It is very well so long as the energies are at all events fully and socially occupied. For the off-hours, which tend to lengthen, the interior nature requires to be independently and comfortably furnished. No interests which cannot be probed and tested will be admitted there. Sooner or later, and ever abruptly, the curtain has a trick of descending on the stage, and leaving alone on it the actor's self with no resources but the scanty provision he has laid up of interests really and sincerely his own. It is not always gay, any more than 'dans la Bohème,' in a home with no tenant but oneself, and that self bare!

POPULARITY

POPULARITY

THE word, according to its etymology, signifies a property pertaining to the people; and that expresses very fairly the manner in which it is actually used. When we speak of a man as popular, we mean that the people, that is, the particular community, a whole or a section, to which he belongs has, more or less, appropriated him. It claims rights over him; as he claims corresponding, though different, rights over it. The balance may incline on one side or the other without breach of the relation. Cases have been known in which the object of popular favour has been so secure of it as to play the tyrant. A much more usual experience has been for the community to be excessive in its demands of service in return for the goodwill with which it compliments the individual. He can rebel, if he choose. Far more commonly the initiative in the severance is on the part of the community. That has a propensity towards fickleness. I recollect that Mr. Gladstone had his windows in Harley Street broken by a howling mob, which a little later besieged the same house to compel its reinstated hero to acknowledge its frantic cheers. Nothing is more evanescent

than the devotion; but so long as the bubble floats the popular hero can do no wrong.

Small as is the genuine value of the homage paid, and uncertain as is its durability, it is so obvious an accompaniment of singular personal qualities that it would be absurd to advise its rejection as of course. Nature often throws it in with other bounties. A woman of exceptional beauty and grace can scarcely avoid being popular. Wit and humour, though double-edged weapons, force popularity as well as odium upon their possessors. It is the same with extraordinary mental gifts of all sorts, even wisdom, even piety. Persons to whom it comes thus as an attendant upon certain qualities, or certain combinations of circumstances, cannot be blamed for accepting and using it, so long as it is not made an object in itself. The direct pursuit of it is a meanness, which properly and commonly is punished by failure. So, I am not about to propose that the art should be regularly taught in State schools along with the physical and technical sciences, though it is at least their equal as a ladder for mounting in the world. But it is so far scientific that, when it has arrived, we can in general trace it back to its source. We will then consider a few cases of it, and try by analysing them to surmise the causes.

Take public life, and favour with the public, first. Eloquence brings popularity; yet not all the eloquent have been popular. Lord Derby, the Prime Minister, was an orator, and never popular. Lord

Palmerston, no orator, was. The one, the man as well as the statesman, was sympathetic with the nation; the other might be as statesman, never was as man. Gladstone and Disraeli, again; both, from their start, were orators, and unpopular. Finally, each was idolized, in virtue partly of eloquence, though not of that alone. Never was popularity acquired through more dissimilar agencies than in those two instances. The public, by which I understand the dominant portion of the public for the time being, has a common-sense way of choosing its political leaders. It is guided usually by belief in the ability of personages in the front to do its will. That capacity it discovered in Gladstone, before it accorded him popularity. For the same reason earlier it had followed Lord John Russell, who never was popular. Gradually it discovered in Gladstone a fountain of sympathy; and thenceforward he held the key to its heart.

The double gift was the secret of Gladstone's popularity; of his irresistible ascendancy. His great, his sole real rival's mastery rested on bases totally different. The effect of his oratory was due to its embroidery with fascinating purple patches; there was no majestic flow. He did not win, he scarcely attempted to win, sympathy. The only approach to it was when, almost by an accident, his statesmanship, in the throes of the Russo-Turkish war, coincided with a gust of national alarm. His wit and imagination charmed; they did not con-

vince the Kingdom, even his own party, that it possessed in him a supreme instrument for the accomplishment of its work. His qualities which eventually vanquished national prejudices, positive antipathy, were his cold audacity and unexpectedness. These late in the day brought him popularity, and harnessed the country to his chariot. The public at last sympathized with him, not he with it. The nation at no time hoped for much from the party leader; it was captivated by the man. Fortune had its jest, that the people which forgot its belief in Walpole while he yet ruled, the fascination exercised over it by the Pitts, father and son, its admiration of Fox, Canning, Peel, perhaps of Gladstone himself, before the breath was well out of their bodies, still remembers its Sphinx, and crowns his statue with offerings of a simplicity odious to all his instincts!

Popularity frequently embraces an element of caprice; and seldom has that been indulged more remarkably than on behalf of Disraeli. Curiosity also was on his side, and has in other instances prompted the choice of a popular favourite. Perhaps I should rather say, it emphasizes and confirms the choice. I remember a time when Robert Lowe appeared to be a likely candidate, chiefly through the curiosity which his wit, and cross-grainedness too, had stirred. He was discarded on the reasonable ground that when the opportunity came his administrative powers proved unequal to the task of

satisfying the nation's demands of service. Curiosity, again, may help to account for the strange popularity of one eminent statesman of our own day. Few public men, I should have thought, had less of the properties making for the multitude's grace than he. Many of his opinions given forth, or suspected, might have been supposed to be altogether anti-popular. Yet all contrarieties have been pardoned, in virtue of the interest he has always excited in the public. It has been attracted by his reserve, by the inner intellectual life it knows he leads, apart from it, from its noise and uproar, from care for the prizes it can bestow, from the affairs he himself conducts, and skilfully and successfully, on its behalf. Never, as might have been apprehended, has it felt jealousy of the claims upon him of philosophy, and that of a kind far remote from the line of popular predilection. Rather its vanity has been gratified by the sacrifices he has offered up of the speculations he loves to the transaction of its matter-of-fact business.

The theme of popularity has a natural connexion with political life, and with the careers of politicians. Either it or the reverse is in politics all but inevitable. I could not say the same altogether of wealth, if the possession of that can be called a vocation. But undoubtedly popular favour may depend on expenditure; and it is worth while to try to learn the how and why. Persons of large means which they employ wisely and beneficially, are not to be

blamed for expecting thanks from the gainers by the outlay. Often they are surprised at receiving none. In their neighbourhood may be a graceless spendthrift, whom everybody likes, and his inferiors adore. It is worth the while of the wealthy to learn the secret of his favour, which the slightest observation will disclose. It is the scattering broadcast of waistcoat-pocket-money. The rich of discreet and sober tempers wish, as in the general interests of society they ought, to have a shilling's worth of labour for a shilling. If, as is not unusual, they desire popularity also, they must occasionally silence conscience. For disbursement outside direct business transactions, let them carry about no smaller change than half-crowns. Crowns perhaps are too ostentatious. Thus, for a mile's cab ride, they will pay twice and a half its value. A notorious and persistent course of this conduct might easily win them elections into Parliament itself.

The same disposition in the multitude which is gratified by a superior's lavish distribution of small sums on strangers is captivated by a generous openhandedness towards a man's self. View princes, nobles, statesmen, millionaires, men of genius. Many are known to lead lives of care, to have no thought but for their business, their families, their country. Others, as many or more, may be mindful at once of themselves and of affairs. They apply faithfully, not unduly, the injunction not to muzzle the ox which treadeth out the corn. Can there be a

doubt which division of public men is the more popular? People for the most part prefer to see their social superiors taking advantage of their material opportunities. They want them to relish the appropriate luxuries which their position commands. Life is cheered for the crowd condemned to a bare living wage by the glitter and variety at the command of Fortune's favourites. It is a paradox, which experience proves merely natural, that the masses, whether in rags or in broadcloth, delight to think of a king as enjoying the splendour, the gaiety of a king's life. Let a professional man try dwelling and working, as often he must, in a work-a-day neighbourhood. How sick, unless he be a hardened philanthropist, he grows, as he takes his constitutional, of noting that every passer-by wears a countenance as careworn and shop-worn as his own!

I do not forget that there is the ascetic, the saint, the fanatic, whom a whole people worships. He abjures all pleasures, all possessions. He may be a Simeon Stylites, caring only for his own salvation. He may be a Father Damien, martyring himself for his lepers. He may be a St. Francis, a St. Dominic. To judge from ecclesiastical biographies, many in the class have conquered the favour of the multitude. When won it exceeds all popularity of the ordinary kind. But it means no half repudiation of earthly joys and treasures. All or none. No trimming. No moderate use, without abuse, of this life's good things. No simple avoidance of excess, such as

common sense and conscience approve. The same principle applies to the relation between worldly popularity and worldly expenditure. Rational expenditure may earn the commendation of society, and entitle to the reputation of a worthy citizen. It is compatible with the attainment otherwise, as by a Gladstone, of rapturous popularity; it will not give, or even notably contribute to it. For a man to be popular in virtue of his sentiments about money, he must disburse it royally, or he must treat it as accurst. In connexion with popularity it admits of no golden mean.

In other trades than politics, and money- or Saint-growing, popularity is not of the essence; it is an extra. There have been barristers popular, like Russell, surgeons, like Paget, painters, like Leighton, soldiers and sailors, like Nelson and Outram, humourists, like Sydney Smith, novelists, like Scott and Dickens. They did great work; and without it they would not have become popular. Contemporaries who did as great, perhaps greater, never were. Other lives may have been as useful to the public, or more useful. Acts done in them may have been, and be, as popular, in the true sense of being possessions of the people. It is not even as if the doers would have deprecated an offer of popularity; have shunned it as an odious burden. Some would, and did. A hundredfold as many pined for it as the most precious of rewards; cried out upon the ingratitude of their age for withholding it.

I can indeed imagine no circle of society in which a habit of selecting favourites, and of agreeing with a good grace to be they, does not exist. The wonder at the prevalence of the system in all its phases is the same. It is not so much that the community should elect a king as that it should invariably find candidates for its crown. The community, on the easy terms of acclaiming a sovereign after the Polish fashion, buys a slave to do its work at little or no cost. If he presume upon the choice, he can be ejected. He is paid starvation wages while he stays, and is shamed when he leaves. Too frequently each party to the relation suffers in character. Each by turns is tempted to play the sycophant. Of the two the favourite of a people resigns more and gains less. The most honest of politicians has to pay the price of power. In order that he may guide he will have to follow. At all events, he must lay aside for a more convenient season the championship of various cherished views. An explanation, an excuse, of the submission of some unlikely necks to a galling yoke is, that members of human society are in general born incapable of refusing to do its work. A beauty cannot help smiling upon a whole circle of adorers, though she reciprocate the affection only of one. It is not necessarily the mere flattery to vanity which creates the popular idol; it is that certain men are made with faculties which insist upon finding exercise and employment thus.

With one such I was intimately acquainted. None was more popular. He was aware of his popularity. He enjoyed it; and it never spoilt him. Never even did it rub off the bloom of freshness of life for him. Each morning he would wake into a world at once old and new, which he, in his sphere, was to guide. He was of it, moulded of the same clay—with a spirit a little finer than most; of the same energies and impulses—a little stronger, and better under control—just a foot's pace ahead. From his point of vantage he looked out, down, back—not too far—onward, not too long. Having shaped in outline his own course, he rode daily forth into a town, which seemed to have been waiting for him. His happiness was to be sure that everywhere he was welcome; and he beamed upon all. I have marked how glad was his reception; how bright and eager a company grew; how light flashed to and fro between it and him. In coming to his whole night's labour, he brought and kept a luminous atmosphere of warm, expectant sympathy with the world he had quitted, with the world, his very own, which he was rejoining. He was absolutely of his People within, as he had been of his People without. All workers there were encouraged to understand that they too were guiding our planet in its course. Chiefest of all, as being nearest—and invited and bidden to think himself of the dearest—so was his one chosen official colleague made to feel!

Here was an example, a pattern, of true popu-

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